

# Archaeological Investigations for the 1.25-Acre Springhill Suites/Fairfield Inn & Suites Project, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Prepared for  
**CONSORT, INC.**

Prepared by  
**Suzanne Trussell, Daniel Culotta, Mary Jo Galindo,  
Ken Lawrence, and Christina Nielsen**

**SAN ANTONIO**

BEXAR COUNTY TEXAS  
1879

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**SWCA**  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS





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SUITES/FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES PROJECT,  
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

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**CONSORT, INC.**  
315 Bowie Street  
Austin, Texas 78703

Prepared by

Suzanne Trussell, Daniel Culotta, Mary Jo Galindo, Ken Lawrence, and Christina Nielsen

**SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS**

4407 Monterey Oaks Boulevard  
Building 1, Suite 110  
Austin, Texas 78749  
[www.swca.com](http://www.swca.com)

Principal Investigator

Kevin A. Miller

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## ABSTRACT

On behalf of Consort, Inc., SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted archival research and archaeological construction monitoring at the 1.25-acre Springhill Suites/Fairfield Inn & Suites Project located in the block bounded by Bowie Street, Houston Street, and Bonham Street (formerly Nacogdoches Road), in downtown City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The project involves the construction of a six-story, 135,000-square foot, 216-room double tower hotel in downtown San Antonio by HGP San Antonio Corporation. In a review of proposed development plans for the site, the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) indicated that significant archaeological sites have been documented within and adjacent to the 1.25-acre tract, including the historic landmark of the Alamo. After a review of the project plans and preliminary documentation, the HPO requested that detailed historical and archival research be conducted beginning with the Spanish Colonial period through the 1950s, particularly concentrating on the Texas Revolutionary period including, but not limited to, the Battle of the Alamo. Subsequent to the background review, an intensive archaeological monitoring program of construction activities was conducted through the summer and into the fall of 2009.

The archival review determined that the property was likely agricultural land up to 1869. During the pivotal battle nearby, most of the traffic bound for the Alamo from the east would have passed by the project area. Although difficult to confirm, during the 1836 Battle of the Alamo, the project area may have been the site of a Mexican fortification. The artillery position that C. Sanchez Navarro recorded in his journal was located 250.8 m (823 feet) northeast of the Alamo, in the general direction of the project area. Overall, based on this review of historical maps, the project area has been the site of development since before 1869, when the first building is depicted on the property, and certainly since 1888, when a lumber mill was in operation. The property continued to see commercial development throughout the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. At some point after 1951 most of the buildings on the property were torn down and replaced with a parking lot.

Construction monitoring occurred between July and November 2009 and identified abundant, heavily mixed and disturbed cultural debris spanning the mid-nineteenth to twentieth centuries. No evidence of Spanish Colonial occupation or any Alamo-related artifacts were observed during monitoring. Most of the cultural material and features observed during monitoring dated from the mid- to late twentieth century and could be grossly correlated to buildings and structures identified on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps dating to the twentieth century. Eighteen cultural features were documented during the work, including items such as a cistern, numerous concrete piers and footings, a well, and concrete floor remnants. Any evidence of earlier occupations appears to have been destroyed by the later twentieth century commercial construction on the site.

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## INTRODUCTION

On behalf of Consort, Inc., SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted historic archival research followed by an intensive archaeological monitoring program at the construction of a hotel on a 1.25-acre tract located in downtown San Antonio about just west of Interstate Highway (IH) 37. The triangular-shaped project area is bounded by Bowie Street to the east, Houston Street to the south, and Bonham Street (formerly Nacogdoches Road) to the west (Figure 1). In a review of proposed development plans for the site, SWCA and the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) noted significant archaeological sites documented within and adjacent to the 1.25-acre tract, including the historic landmark of the Alamo (Figure 2). After a review of the project plans and preliminary documentation, the HPO requested that a historic archival review be conducted with subsequent archaeological monitoring of all construction activities at the site. Monitoring was chosen as opposed to archaeological survey due to high levels of contaminated soils on the site, the result of over a century of commercial development at the 1.25-acre tract.

The investigations began with intensive historic archival and map research for the property encompassing the Spanish Colonial period up through the 1950s, concentrating in particular on the Texas Revolutionary period including, but not limited to, the Battle of the Alamo. Subsequent to the archival research, the construction activities were monitored, with a focus on Spanish Colonial and mid-nineteenth century resources. The goal of the work was to examine and assess any cultural deposits revealed in the construction, adequately document the cultural resources, and provide sufficient information to make determinations on age and significance. All

work was done in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA).

## PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION

The project involves the construction of a six-story, 135,000-square foot, 216-room double tower hotel in downtown San Antonio by HGP San Antonio Corporation. Prior to excavations for the hotel, the triangular-shaped property was a 1.25-acre parking lot. The development project included the excavation and removal of the existing pavement and underlying fill to an approximate depth of 3 m (10 feet). Following the removal of the fill, the hotel complex was to be constructed. This commercial development encompassed the entire project tract.

The project area is in a highly developed urban setting situated on level floodplains of the San Antonio River, which is about 838 m (2,750 feet) to the west. This location is in the heart of downtown San Antonio within in an area of continuous occupation since the city's historic beginnings. In this urban location, the project tract and surrounding area has undergone extensive development for the last couple of centuries. These disturbances include commercial and residential development, associated utilities, and roads. The site of the Alamo is only 200–250 feet west-southwest of the 1.25-acre site, with newly constructed hotels on both the east and west sides of the triangular tract. A parking lot is located to the south across East Houston Street. The Central Fire Headquarters is located on the southwest corner of the project area and will not be impacted by the current undertaking.



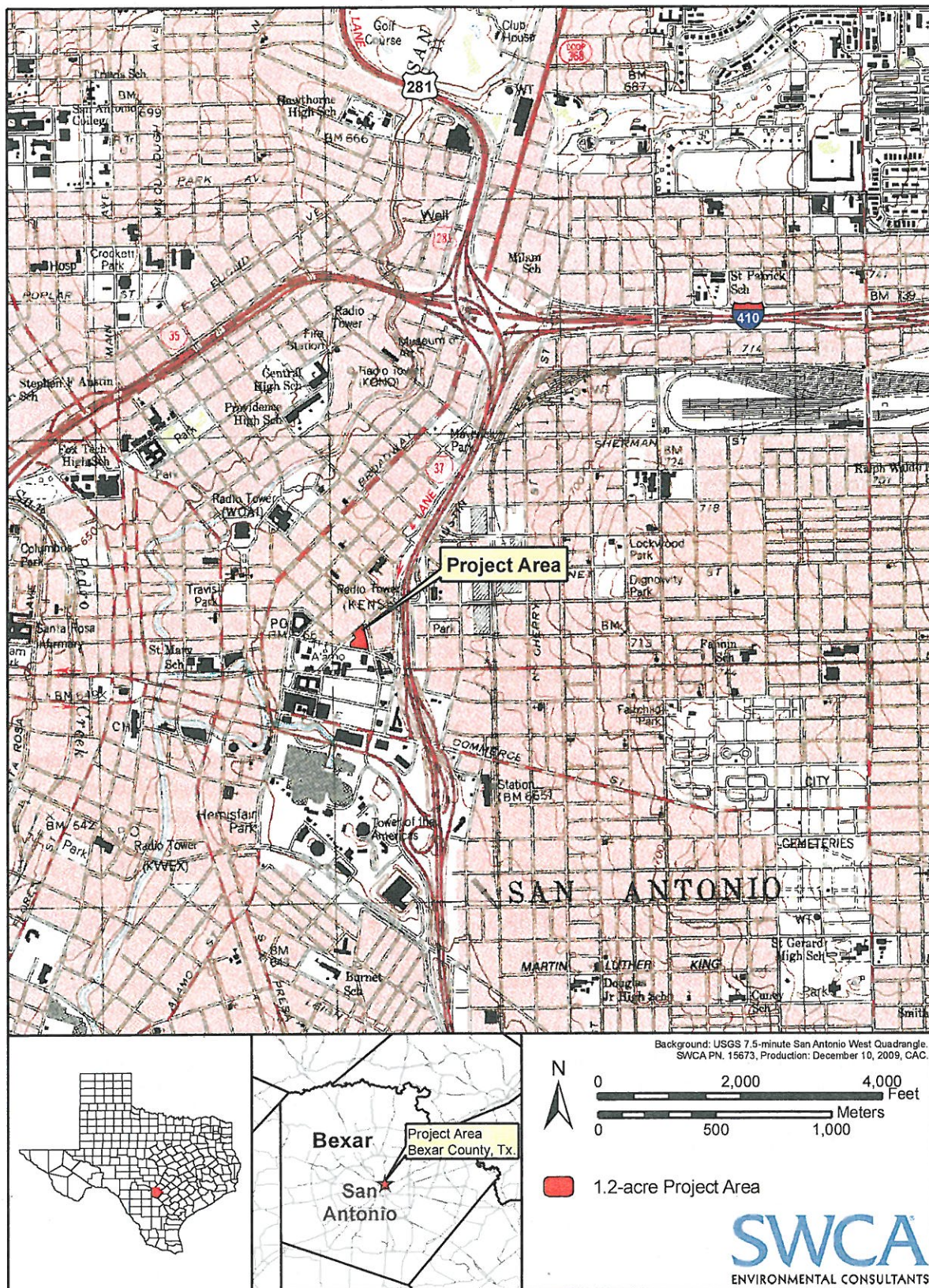


Figure 1. Project location map.



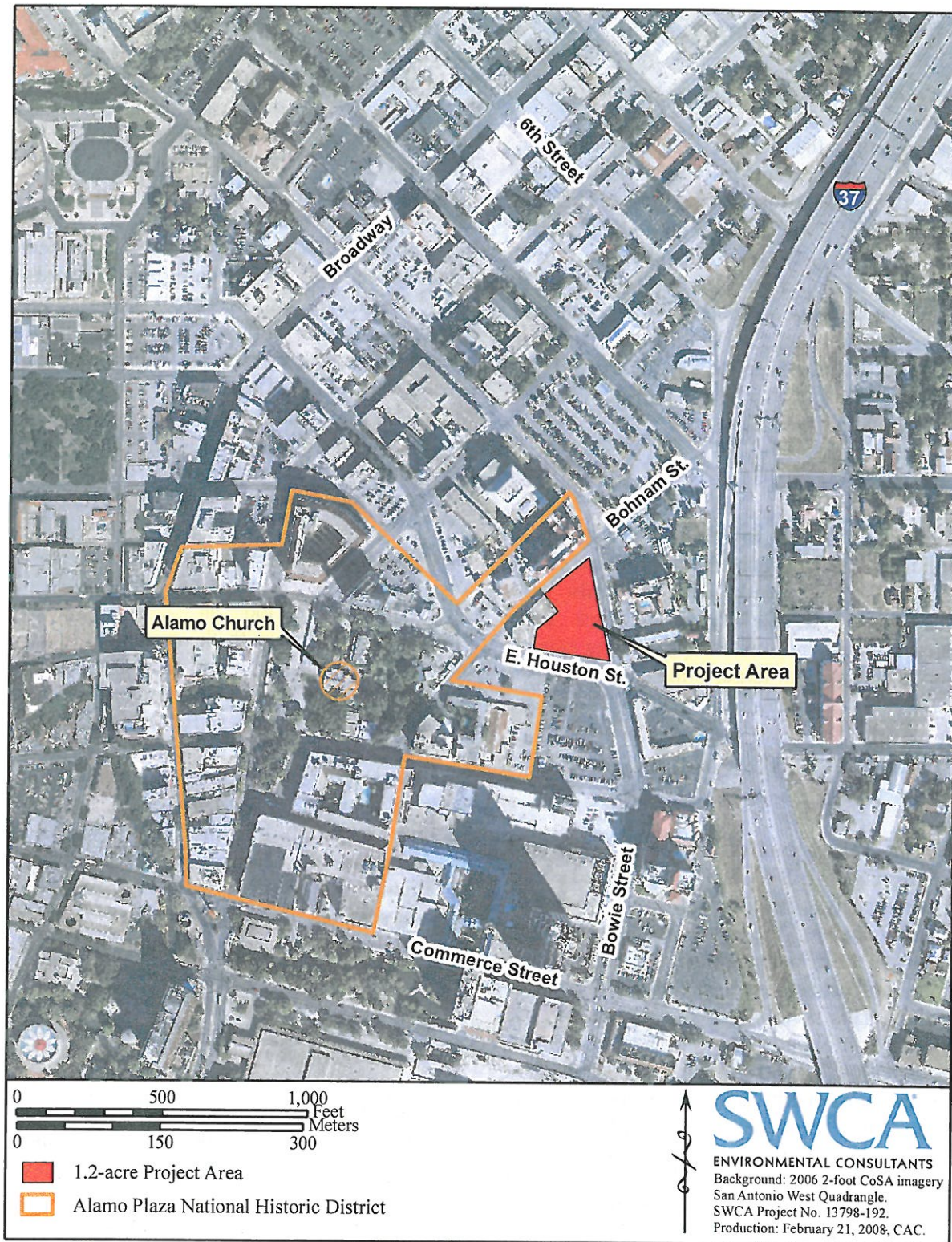


Figure 2. Project area map.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

### ***GEOLOGY***

Geologically, the project area is located in Fluvial terrace deposits (Barnes 1983). This formation is Pleistocene-age terrace deposits comprised of gravel, sand, silt, and clay. Low terrace deposits are mostly above flood level of entrenched streams. Generally, these areas along most rivers are deeply entrenched and are no longer active floodplains; however, there are several exceptions, including the San Antonio River which is still an active floodplain (Barnes 1983).

### ***SOILS***

The soils mapped for the project area are exclusively terrace deposits of Houston Black clay (1–3 percent). These soils are characterized as dark gray to black deep calcareous clayey soils occupying long narrow slopes that parallel larger drainages (Taylor et al. 1991).

### **CULTURAL SETTING AND ARCHIVAL REVIEW**

Prior to any ground disturbing activities and monitoring, SWCA conducted a comprehensive examination of available historic maps, records, and archives to reconstruct the history of the 1.25-acre parcel, from the earliest Spanish Colonial period to present. This section provides a review of the cultural setting for the project area under examination. The research concentrated on historic ownership and occupation of the project area to develop a general history and identify any significant landmarks or places that should be considered during the project development. The focus was on the time period surrounding the Battle of the Alamo, but also included the history of the tract up through the 1950s. SWCA's Historical

Archaeologist conducted this research at several local repositories, including the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), the THC library, the Texas General Land Office, the Center for American History at The University of Texas at Austin (UT), the Texas State Library in Austin, and the Perry-Castañeda Library at UT. Additional sources of information that were consulted included published reports, aerial photographs, records at the Texas Natural Resources Information Systems archives, and geo-referenced maps contained in the Texas Historic Overlay (Foster et al. 2006). The results of the archival work are presented here, integrated into a general cultural history of the surrounding area followed by an examination of the built environment on the tract over time.

### ***CULTURAL HISTORY***

The Historic period in central Texas theoretically begins with the arrival of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and the survivors of the Narváez expedition along the Texas coast in 1528 (Krieger 2002). European incursions, however, into south-central Texas were initially rare, and the first Europeans did not settle in this region until around A.D. 1700. Spanish incursions into the region from the late seventeenth century on left valuable information on native groups and tribes. Several scholars, including Hester (1989) and Newcomb (2002), have provided historical accounts of Native Americans and their interactions with the Spanish, the Republic of Mexico, the Texas Republic, and the United States throughout the region.

The San Antonio area was first explored in 1691 by the Governor of the Spanish Province of Texas, Domingo Terán de los Ríos, and Father Damián Massenet. The pair traveled to San Pedro Springs where they encountered a hunter-gather tribe named Payaya. In their village named Yanaguana, the Payaya lived in



simple huts made of brushwood and grass. The river and village were renamed after San Antonio de Padua by Terán and Massenet (Johnston 1947).

Further Spanish exploration was conducted in 1709 by Father Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares. Father Olivares was the first to express interest in setting up a mission in the San Antonio area (Fehrenbach 2008; Johnston 1947). The project area was probably uninhabited at this point, although intermittent use by native people would be possible; however, the nearby San Pedro Springs and San Antonio River would have been greater attractions.

### SPANISH MISSIONS

After a series of missions had been established in what would become eastern Texas, the Spanish government in the New World decided to begin settlement in 1718 at a bend in the San Antonio River. Mission San Antonio de Valero was founded on May 1 and followed four days later by the nearby San Antonio de Béxar Presidio and the civil settlement, Villa de Béxar. The location was a convenient stopping point on the Camino Real, the newly established highway founded in 1691 by the previously mentioned Domingo Terán de Los Ríos and Father Damián Massenet to connect Mexico to the East Texas missions. However, in 1719 war between France and Spain resulted in the withdrawal of the Spanish from the east Texas missions, who reestablished their mission communities near the settlement along the San Antonio River.

Mission San Antonio de Valero, originally located west of San Pedro Springs, survived three moves and numerous setbacks during its early years (Schoelwer 2009). The mission was moved to the west side of the San Antonio River around 1730. After a disastrous epidemic in 1739, the mission was moved to

its present location on higher ground (Cruz 2008).

There is little available information on aboriginal groups and their ways of life except for the fragmentary data Spanish missionaries gathered. The general project area was reportedly inhabited by several aboriginal groups, which included Tonkawa, Lipan Apache, Comanche, Jumano, Catqueza, and Karankawa (Cecil and Greene 2004; Foster 1995; Newcomb 2002). In the San Antonio area and areas to the south, these groups have been referred to collectively as Coahuiltecan because of an assumed similarity in way of life, but many individual groups may have existed (Campbell 1988). Particular Coahuiltecan groups, such as the Payaya and Juanca, have been identified as occupying the San Antonio area (Campbell 1988).

Some native groups made contact with the Spanish in San Antonio seeking protection from the Apache at newly established Spanish missions, settlements, and presidios like the Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) and the Presidio San Antonio de Bexar (Chipman 1992:117). The Spanish in turn, actively recruited the Native Americans to help bolster their settlements on this northern frontier in response to perceived French incursions led by La Salle.

The Spanish presence around San Antonio is best seen as part of the complex European political picture of the time. The beginning of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was an era of more-permanent contact between Europeans and Native Americans. Specifically, increasing numbers of Spanish moved northward out of Mexico establishing settlements and missions on their northern frontier (see Castañeda [1936–1956] and Bolton [1970] for extended discussions of the mission system and Indian relations in Texas and the San Antonio area).

The Spanish Missions also served as a point of contact between the southward-advancing Apaches and the Spanish, with native groups often caught in between. Disease and hostile encounters with Europeans and intruding groups such as the Apache were already wreaking their inevitable and disastrous havoc on native social structures and economic systems by this time.

Establishment of the mission system in the first half of the eighteenth century to its ultimate demise around 1800 brought the peaceful movement of some indigenous groups into mission life, but others were forced in or moved in to escape the increasing hostilities of southward-moving Apaches and Comanches. Many of the Payaya and Juanca lived at Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo), but so many died there that their numbers declined rapidly (Campbell 1988:106, 121–123). By the end of the mission period, European expansion, disease, and intrusions by other Native American peoples had decimated many Native American groups. The small numbers of surviving Payaya and Juanca were acculturated into mission life. The last references to the Juanca and Payaya were recorded in 1754 and 1789, respectively, in the waning days of the mission (Campbell 1988:98, 123). By that time, intrusive groups such as the Tonkawa, Apache, and Comanche had moved into the region to fill the void. Outside of the missions, few sites attributable to these groups have been investigated. To complicate matters, many aboriginal ways of life endured even after contact with the Spanish. For example, manufacture of stone tools continued even for many groups settling in the missions (Fox 1979).

San Antonio became the capital of Spanish Texas in 1773. By 1778, the settlement had a population of 2,060 including those Indians living in the missions. However, conditions

within the settlement were often described as poor, resulting from its location at the edge of Spanish-controlled Texas. The population was comprised of a mix of Europeans, mestizos, and a few slaves. By 1795, all the missions in San Antonio were secularized and Mission San Antonio de Valero, later called the Alamo, was converted to a military barracks (Fehrenbach 1978). There is no indication that the project area was ever part of the Alamo Mission complex. It is consistently depicted beyond the mission complex in historic maps. However, it may have been utilized as farmland for the mission.

### SPANISH TEXAS REBELLIONS

New Spain and Spanish Texas around the beginning of the nineteenth century was a turbulent time of numerous insurrections and conflicts (Campbell 2003). These conflicts, in part, arose over internal political struggles between the *peninsulares* (natives of Spain) and the *criollos* (those of Spanish blood born in America) (Campbell 2003:89).

One of these revolutions occurred in San Antonio on January 21, 1811 when retired militia captain Juan Bautista de las Casas and some co-conspirators captured Governor Salcedo (Campbell 2003:90; Richardson et al. 1981:41). Las Casas proclaimed himself leader of the revolutionary government and then set about arresting royalists and confiscating their property (Campbell 2003:90). This revolution lasted 39 days when a royalist counterrevolutionary force led by Juan Manuel Zambrano overthrew Las Casas and returned control of San Antonio over to Governor Salcedo (Campbell 2003:91). Las Casas was arrested and sent to Mexico for trial. In Monclova, he was found guilty of treason and shot to death. His head was sent back to San Antonio to be displayed on Military Plaza (Caldwell 2008; Ramsdell 1968).

The residents of San Antonio supported Mexican independence in 1813 but the town was recaptured by Royalist forces in the battles of Alazán Creek and Medina. During this period of unrest, conditions in Texas worsened. Inadequate provisions and neglected agricultural fields along with the fear of political and military upheavals forced many Texans to abandon their homes and move elsewhere (Fehrenbach 2008; Heusinger 1951).

Other concerns at this time for New Spain and Spanish Texas were the 'filibusters' or Anglo-American intruders with political designs (e.g., Philip Nolan in 1801, Louis Aury in 1816, and James Long 1821) (Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981). The filibuster incursion with the most notoriety was the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition in 1812 (Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981). José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara and Augustus William Magee led an expedition into Texas from Louisiana in order to forcibly take control of Texas. From August of 1812 to April of 1813, the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition traveled westward across Texas capturing Nacogdoches, Trinidad de Salcedo, and La Bahía. On March 28, 1813 near the juncture of Salado Creek and the San Antonio River, the 'Battle of Salado' was fought between Spanish royalists and the republican army of the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition (Campbell 2003:91-92; Richardson et al. 1981:42). The republican army defeated the Spanish royalist army and on April 1, 1813 Gutiérrez entered San Antonio and Governor Salcedo and about a dozen officers surrendered (Campbell 2003:91-92; Richardson et al. 1981:42).

On April 6, 1813 in San Antonio, Gutiérrez proclaimed a declaration of independence, forming the first republic of Texas with Gutiérrez as "President Protector of the State of Texas" (Campbell 2003:93). However, for a variety of reasons Gutiérrez's reign was

short, lasting about three months when General José Álvarez de Toledo y Dubois deposed him (Campbell 2003:93; McGraw et al. 1998; Richardson et al. 1981; Thonhoff 2005).

New Spain responded to the rebellion by sending General Joaquín de Arredondo and his army to San Antonio in order to crush the rebels. Arredondo and his army left Laredo in early August and marched to San Antonio along the Laredo Road. Toledo and the republican army intercepted the Spanish army south of the Medina River in order to spare San Antonio from the impending conflict (Schwarz and Thonhoff 1985). Thus, on August 18, 1813, the two armies met and fought the 'Battle of the Medina', which is sometimes referred to as, 'the bloodiest battle ever fought on Texas soil' (Campbell 2003:93; Thonhoff 2005). General Arredondo's forces consisted of 1,830 soldiers while Toledo's republican army contained 1,400 Anglos, Tejanos, Indians, and former royalists (Campbell 2003; Thonhoff 2005).

After four hours of heavy fighting, the Spanish army overwhelmingly defeated the republican army by killing all but about 100 soldiers, which escaped. General Arredondo and his troops followed up their victory by traveling to San Antonio and subsequently eastward toward Nacogdoches executing, imprisoning, and confiscating the property of anyone associated with the rebellion (Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981). Arredondo's eradication of all Texas Anglo-Americans and liberal Mexicans left the province uninhabited with the exception of San Antonio (Richardson et al. 1981:43). Not until the 1820s, was any effort again expended to attract settlement into the province (Richardson et al. 1981).

As part of the fearsome lesson of rebellion, General Arredondo left the bodies of the



republican soldiers from the 'Battle of the Medina' unburied (Campbell 2003; Thonhoff 2005). It was not until 1822 (nine years after the battle) when the first governor of Texas, José Félix Trespalacios, in the newly formed Republic of Mexico had the bones collected and buried at the battlefield (Thonhoff 2005).

The devastating defeat of the republican army at the Battle of the Medina ended the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition and Texas' first republic (Thonhoff 2005). This battle is notable in that it was one of the largest in North America up to the Civil War, which had consequences that affected the demography and economic development of the region for years after the conflict (McGraw et al. 1998:285). However, possibly due to the tumultuous times of the era and the outcome of the battle, it has largely been forgotten and the exact location of the battle and the burial site lost (McGraw et al. 1998; Thonhoff 2005).

Historic maps and archival records project the location of this battle near the Bexar-Atascosa County line, about 5–6 miles south of the Medina River, roughly midway between State Highway (SH) 16 and IH 37 (McGraw et al. 1998:161).

Although rebellion and revolt had been suppressed, the feelings of discontent between the upper and lower classes and the dissatisfaction with Old Spain remained (Richardson et al. 1981). Finally, in early 1821, the conservative upper classes of Mexico represented by Agustín de Iturbide met with rebel leader Vicente Guerrero and negotiated the 'Plan of Iguala' on February 24, 1821. This plan, in part, proclaimed New Spain independent from Old Spain and was to be governed by a constitutional monarchy that protected the Catholic Church and racial equality (Richardson et al. 1981:52). Sensing the inevitable, Viceroy Juan O'Donojú signed the Treaty of Córdoba that recognized the

'Plan of Iguala' and Spanish Texas became Mexican Texas (Campbell 2003:97; Richardson et al. 1981:52).

## TEXAS SETTLEMENT AND INDEPENDENCE

After Mexico gained independence from Spain, the newly formed country used a policy of land grants to attract settlers into the area, including Anglos from the United States, to help inhabit the sparsely populated northern regions of Mexico. During the 1820s, Empresario (or colonization agent) Green DeWitt obtained grants from the Mexican government to settle four hundred families along the Guadalupe, San Marcos, and Lavaca rivers (Baumgartner and Vollentine 2005; Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981; Smyrl 2003). Early settlement of the colony, known as the DeWitt's Colony, migrated between Gonzales and Lavaca finally settling around Gonzales due to harassment from Comanches and property boundary disputes with settlers of the De León grant (Richardson et al. 1981; Smyrl 2003). Subsequent settlement in the area centered on waterways (Smyrl 2003).

Because of a request from an increasing population seeking assistance from Indian raids, the Mexican government sent a 6-pound cannon to Gonzales in 1831 for their protection (Baumgartner and Vollentine 2005). Subsequently, the attendance by delegates of DeWitt's Colony at the conventions discussing a separation in statehood from Coahuila in 1832 and 1833 and the Consultation of 1835 were viewed as disloyalty and the Mexican government sent forces to retrieve the cannon (Baumgartner and Vollentine 2005; Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981). On October 2, 1835, Lieutenant Francisco Castañeda and 100 dragoons and about 150 Texians converged about a mile east of present day Cost, Texas (Baumgartner and Vollentine 2005; Campbell 2003; Richardson et al. 1981). This conflict was brief, resulting in one shot from the

Gonzales “come and take it” cannon, but it did signal the beginning of the Texas revolution (Baumgartner and Vollentine 2005; Campbell 2003; Hardin 1994; Metz 2001; Richardson et al. 1981).

Emboldened by their success at Gonzales, the Texian volunteers headed for San Antonio. In response, General Martín Perfecto de Cós, along with 650 men, fortified the plaza of San Antonio de Béxar west of the San Antonio River and the Alamo to the east. Texian volunteers arrived in San Antonio on October 12, 1835 to set up camp. Several small skirmishes occurred over the next few months while reinforcements and supplies were acquired and attack plans were debated.

A Mexican deserter informed the Texians that the Mexican army’s morale and rations were low. Upon receiving this news, a council was held to decide on whether to attack. Commanding Officer, Edward Burleson and most of the other officers voted to end the siege. One man spoke up and asked “Who will go with Old Ben Milam into San Antonio?” (House 1949:47). Approximately 300 men joined Milam and the battle finally began on December 5, 1835. The Texians dug trenches between houses they occupied for cover and destroyed the other buildings around them preventing cover for the Mexican troops. General Cós split his troops between San Antonio de Béxar and the Alamo but was unsuccessful at defeating the Texians. When he tried to then focus the majority of his troops at the Alamo, some of his men deserted realizing the battle was lost. By the morning of December 9, 1835, Cós surrendered San Antonio to Burleson and the Texian troops (Barr 2008; House 1949).

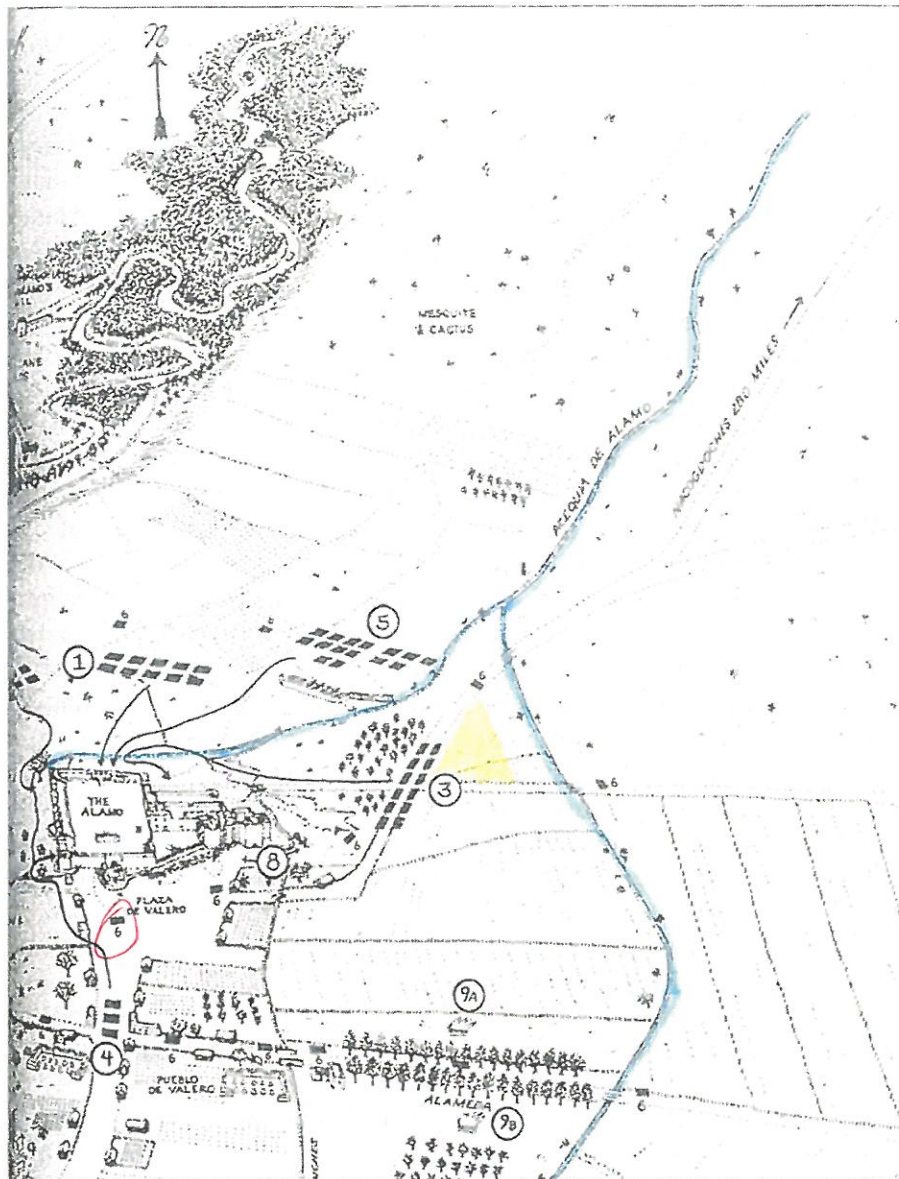
On February 23, 1836, nearly 150 American volunteers took refuge from the approaching Mexican Army in the Alamo Mission in San Antonio under orders from Colonel William

B. Travis (Hatch 1999). The Alamo Mission complex is about 500 feet west-southwest of the project area (Figure 3). A standoff between the Texian Revolutionary Army and the Mexican Army, lasting 13 days, ended in complete annihilation of the Alamo defenders and a victory for the Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna (Hardin 1994; Huffines 1999).

Both the Siege of Bexar and the Battle of the Alamo took place adjacent to the project area, but it appears that most of the action took place to the south and west, rather than the east or northeast. One of the earliest depictions of the project area on a historic map with sufficient detail to be geo-referenced with modern maps is from the 1835 Siege of Bexar (Figure 4). The project area appears to be bisected by the Acequia Madre, which was the main irrigation ditch for the community and constructed approximately 1718–1729. The project area is about 500 feet east-northeast of the Alamo. Its location along East Houston Street meant that most traffic bound for the Alamo from the east would have passed directly by it.

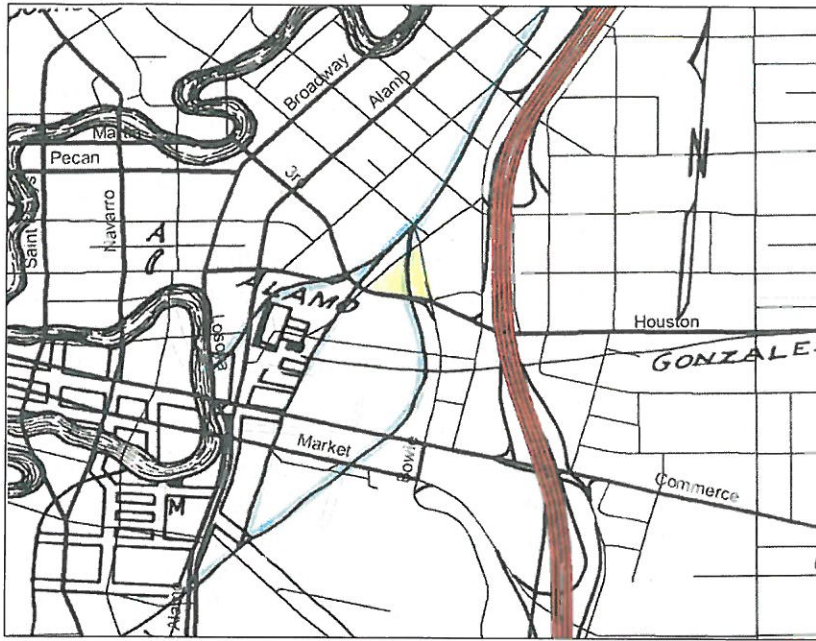
The next map of the project area is a product of the Siege of the Alamo in 1836. Again, the project area is depicted with the Acequia Madre bisecting it (Figure 5). Later maps consistently show the irrigation ditch further to the east. Thus, these two earliest maps appear to suffer from a low level of detail and the cartographers’ unfamiliarity with the landscape.

As the Battle of the Alamo remains an iconic piece of history and was located so close to the project area, a more detailed account of the battle is presented below. It appears that the project area may have been the location of a artillery position, and the road on the south side of the project area (East Houston Street) saw several troop movements along its path,



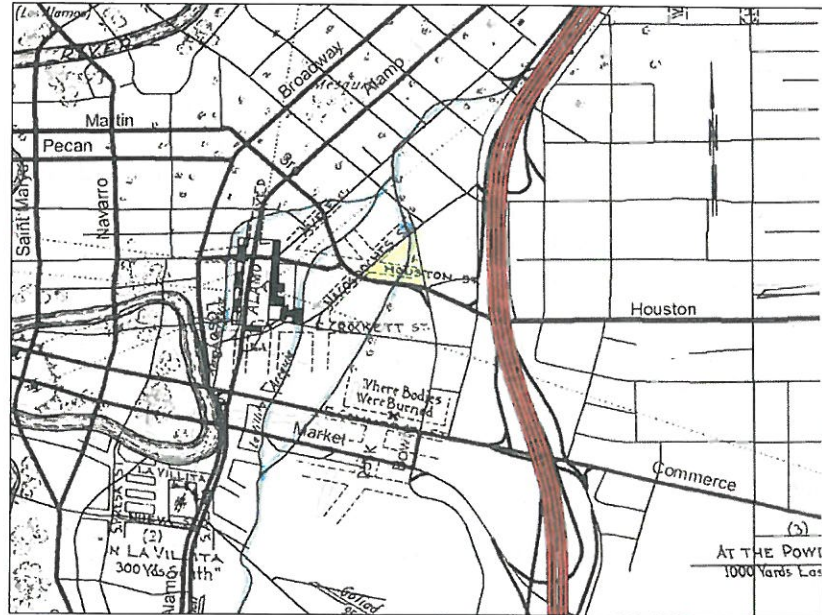
**Figure 3.** Mexican positions on Day 13 of the Siege of the Alamo included Col. José María Romero's battalion of 350 soldiers from Matamoros (3) marching towards the Alamo along Nacogdoches Road and passing the project area (indicated in yellow). Nearby, along both Nacogdoches Road and E. Houston Street were Mexican cavalry positions (6). Mexican General Cós' column (1) and Santa Anna's reserves (5) are also depicted to the west of the project area, while Col. Juan Morales' San Luis Potosi Battalion (4) approached the Alamo from the south. Texians' attempted escape routes (8) and the location of funeral pyres for Texian dead (9a and 9b) are also depicted (Adapted from Huffines 1999:133).





**Figure 4.** The project area is depicted in yellow on this 1835 map that has been geo-referenced with modern street locations. The path of the Acequia Madre is highlighted in blue and appears to flow through the project area.

**Figure 5.** The project area is depicted in yellow on this 1836 map that has been geo-referenced with modern street locations. The path of the Acequia Madre is highlighted in blue and appears to flow through the project area.



including the arrival of the reinforcements from Gonzales and Colonel José María Romero's battalion from Matamoros.

### **BATTLE OF THE ALAMO**

The Alamo Garrison had been acquired following the defeat of Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cós' army in the December 1835 Battle of San Antonio. The subsequent formation of the Matamoros Expedition cost the Alamo much needed supplies and men. This expedition was created with the intentions of invading Mexico through the city of Matamoros; however, the plan was never executed due to political turmoil in the Texas government. Some relief came over the next few months with the arrivals of Colonel Jim Bowie, Colonel William B. Travis and David Crockett; each bringing 12–30 additional men. Rumors of the approaching Mexican army of nearly 2,000 men soon followed (Hatch 1999).

General Santa Anna arrived in San Antonio with between 1,800 and 2,100 men on February 23, 1836. Upon their arrival Colonel Travis ordered his men to retreat into the Alamo (Hatch 1999). General Santa Anna raised a red flag signifying "no quarter—no mercy" and received a cannon shot from the Texians in defiance (Hatch 1999:20). Another defiant cannon is rumored to have been shot in response to a request for an unconditional surrender. In a letter sent February 24, 1836 addressed to the "People of Texas and all Americans in the World," Colonel Travis pleads for assistance and states "if this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his own honor & that of his country. Victory or Death" (Groneman 2001:6).

Over the next few days the Alamo defenders suffered shortages of provisions and water,

constant bombardment on the Alamo and psychological warfare through the nights ordered by General Santa Anna. This method of warfare was intended to "keep every American in position ready to repel the attack, thus through loss of sleep and increasing anxiety unfitting him for the final struggle" (Huffines 1999:47). Morale within the walls of the Alamo lowered even more as Mexican reinforcements arrived daily (Hatch 1999; Huffines 1999).

On the third day of the siege, Mexican troops created a diversion at the Alamo's main gate in an attempt to cross the San Antonio River and reach the south wall of the Alamo through La Villita. The Texians repelled both attacks and subsequently burned buildings in close proximity to the Alamo to deny shelter for Santa Anna's men in La Villita (Hatch 1999). Despite their defeat, Mexican troops were able to establish artillery and infantry entrenchments in La Villita and the Alameda, now Commerce Street.

Several Mexican artillery positions are documented for the Battle of the Alamo, involving a total of six batteries. The artillery position that C. Sanchez Navarro recorded in his journal (Sanchez Navarro 1960) was located 250.8 m (823 feet) northeast of the Alamo, in the general direction of the project area (Labadie et al. 1986). The southwest corner of the project area is minimally about 500 feet east-northeast of the Alamo complex. The best documented of all the Mexican batteries, this position is illustrated both on Sanchez Navarro's map and on La Bastida's map at 672 feet from the Alamo (Labadie et al. 1986). This same location is also depicted on the Merrick (1853) map adjacent to the Acequia Madre and northeast of the Alamo.

On March 2, General Santa Anna located a covered bridge to the northeast of the Alamo giving them a sheltered area within "pistol



shot" (Huffines 1999:97) of the Alamo and posted Jiménez' Battalion at the new location. Another possible battery was located within shooting distance just north of the Alamo and may have used the Acequia Madre as a cover during their advances (Labadie et al. 1986). The conjectural location of this "covered road" has been plotted by some through the project area, but this cannot be conclusively proven (Huffines 1999:99). General Santa Anna ordered many small attacks in an attempt to breach the Alamo's walls (Figure 6). Many Mexicans lost their lives in the process; however, no Texians were killed in the 12-day siege before the final battle (Hatch 1999; Huffines 1999).

The Gonzales Ranging Company, guided by John W. Smith, arrived from Gonzales on March 1 with 32 men and few provisions. This group may have either crossed the project area or skirted its northern border on their way to the Alamo (Huffines 1999:93). Travis, disappointed at the amount of reinforcements and lack of supplies, continued to send requests for aid. Rumors that Colonel James W. Fannin was sending reinforcements gave hope to the Alamo defenders but Colonel Travis feared assistance would not arrive. This fear was confirmed on March 3, when James B. Bonham returned to San Antonio from Goliad with news that Fannin would no longer be sending reinforcements (Huffines 1999).

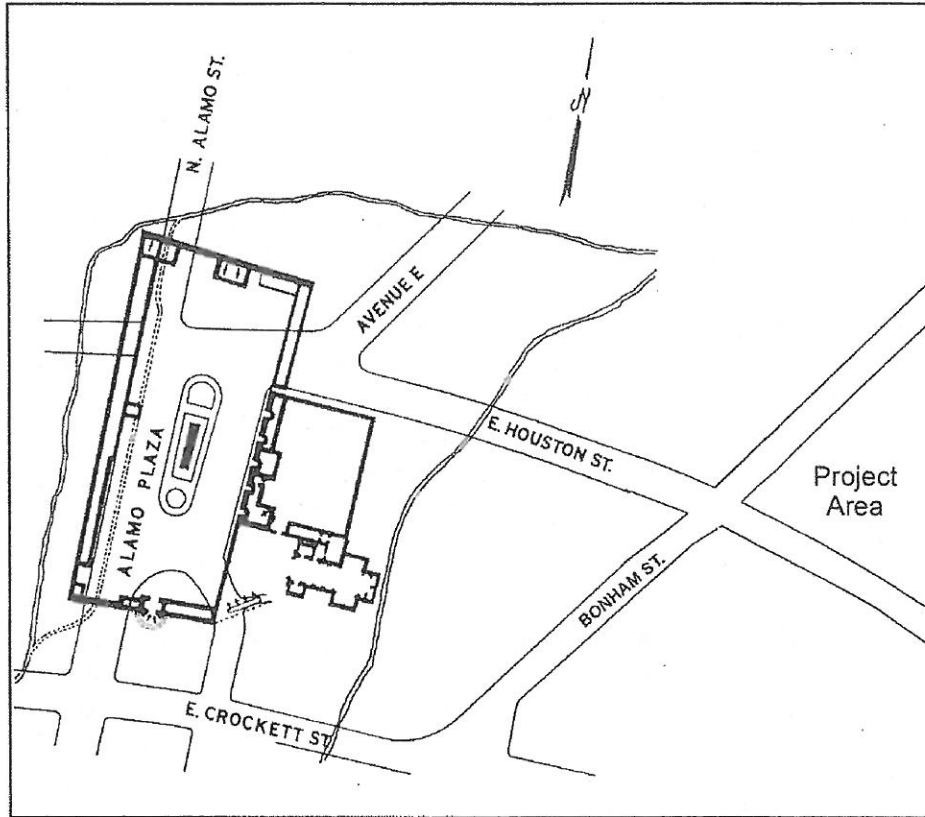
On March 4, General Santa Anna held a Council of War to decide plans of attack and the fate of prisoners. Despite objections from some of the Mexican officers, Santa Anna's decision to take no prisoners was reaffirmed. Meanwhile, Travis informed the Alamo defenders that no more men would be coming to their aid. He gave a speech to the men and asked them to choose between surrender, escaping, or fighting to the death. It is claimed that he drew a line on the ground for those who chose to stay and fight to cross. All but

one man, Louis Rose, crossed the line. Colonel Bowie who was on his death bed, had his comrades carry him over the line to join the brave fighters (Hatch 1999; Huffines 1999).

As the Mexicans finalized their attack strategies and battle preparations commenced, Colonel Travis was entertaining the idea of surrender. He sent a Mexican woman from San Antonio to seek the terms of a possible surrender with the Mexican General. Upon learning about the poor state of the Texians and their garrison, Santa Anna's desire for battle increased. According to Mexican Lt. José de la Peña, Santa Anna "wanted to cause a sensation and would have regretted taking the Alamo without clamor and without bloodshed, for some believed that without these there is no glory" (Hatch 1999:36). The final decision to attack the Alamo with full force was made the following day, March 5, 1836 (Hatch 1999).

The Mexican army moved into position just after midnight on March 6 and waited for the signal to attack. This call came around 5 o'clock in the morning when a soldier cried out "Viva Santa Anna!" (Huffines 1999:134). With the element of surprise lost, Santa Anna ordered his troops to begin the attack on the Alamo garrison (Huffines 1999).

The Texians awoke to the sound of the approaching army and rushed to their posts. Santa Anna's troops began their march in columns but became disorganized before reaching the Alamo walls. The constant fire from the eastern Texian battery caused many of the Mexican troops to corner themselves under the north wall. This confusion made them easy targets for the Texians stationed above. An impatient Santa Anna then released the reserve battalions who eventually breached the north wall and southwest corner of the Alamo. Once inside the garrison, no mercy



**Figure 6.** Alamo Plaza showing the walls and buildings at the time of the Alamo battle, as drawn by Green B. Jameson in 1836, superimposed on modern San Antonio streets (adapted from Fox et al. 1976:Figure 2).



was given to the Alamo defenders (Hatch 1999).

This gruesome battle, lasting only 90 minutes, left every Texian combatant dead. The number of Mexican dead is a matter of debate, with numbers ranging from 70 to 1,600; uncounted more were wounded. Non-combatant survivors, such as Susannah Dickinson and her daughter Angelina Elizabeth, were questioned by Santa Anna and sent on their way with two silver dollars and a blanket. The Texian's bodies were burned on funeral pyres on either side of the Alameda. Santa Anna won the battle at the Alamo but victory and independence was won by the Texians two weeks later in the Battle of San Jacinto (Hatch 1999; Huffines 1999).

#### **REPUBLIC OF TEXAS ERA**

After the events that transpired during the War of Texas Independence, San Antonio and central Texas continued to grow. Population estimates drawn from tax rolls suggest that the population in Texas from 1836–1846 increased by 269 percent (Campbell 2003:159). It was during this time that the phrase 'Gone to Texas' became legendary and the initials 'G.T.T.' were chalked on doors across the southern United States (Campbell 2003:159; Handbook of Texas 2005).

Among those to move into central Texas were German immigrants who came in to the area as a result of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. This society, founded in 1845 by Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, brought a massive influx of German immigrants into central Texas (Fox et al. 1997:2).

#### **UNITED STATES PERIOD (1845–1900)**

After Texas entered the Union in 1845, San Antonio's already diverse population grew dramatically. The Irish came to Texas between

the late 1830s and early 1840s and established a community called Irish Flat. They built houses of rock in this area that resembled cottages found in Ireland. The Irish Flat included the project area and was located north of Alamo Plaza; it was bounded by 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Commerce Street to the south, Bowie Street to the east, and Avenue C (now Broadway) to the west (Figure 7). It is unknown if the residents of Irish Flat used the project area in their development, as it does not appear that many buildings of this time period have survived, and maps of development in this area were not located.

Germans also settled in San Antonio in the 1850s introducing the Bier Halle (Butterfield 1968:21) to the area. The rapid increase in population had been a direct result of the influx of German-speaking settlers. Up until 1877, German-speaking people outnumbered both Hispanics and Anglos. French immigrants added artists and artisans to the culture of the city. Later immigrants to the area included the Polish, Italian, Greek, Syrian and in 1910, the Chinese, all of which formed small communities within the city of San Antonio. The first Polish group, led by the Rev. Leopold Moczygemba, arrived in San Antonio in 1854 and built St. Michael's Parish in 1866 (Rybczyk 2000). The church was rebuilt in the 1920s, but was later demolished by construction of the Hemisphere.

Culture and architecture from each immigrant community has seeped into San Antonio and merged together, forming a rich cultural community. This diverse culture is evident in downtown San Antonio with historic missions and Victorian mansions built next to modern offices and homes (Butterfield 1968; Fehrenbach 2008). A historic property was located to the southwest of the project area, but has since been lost to development. The Gallagher property was built in 1850 approximately 50 feet south of the Alamo



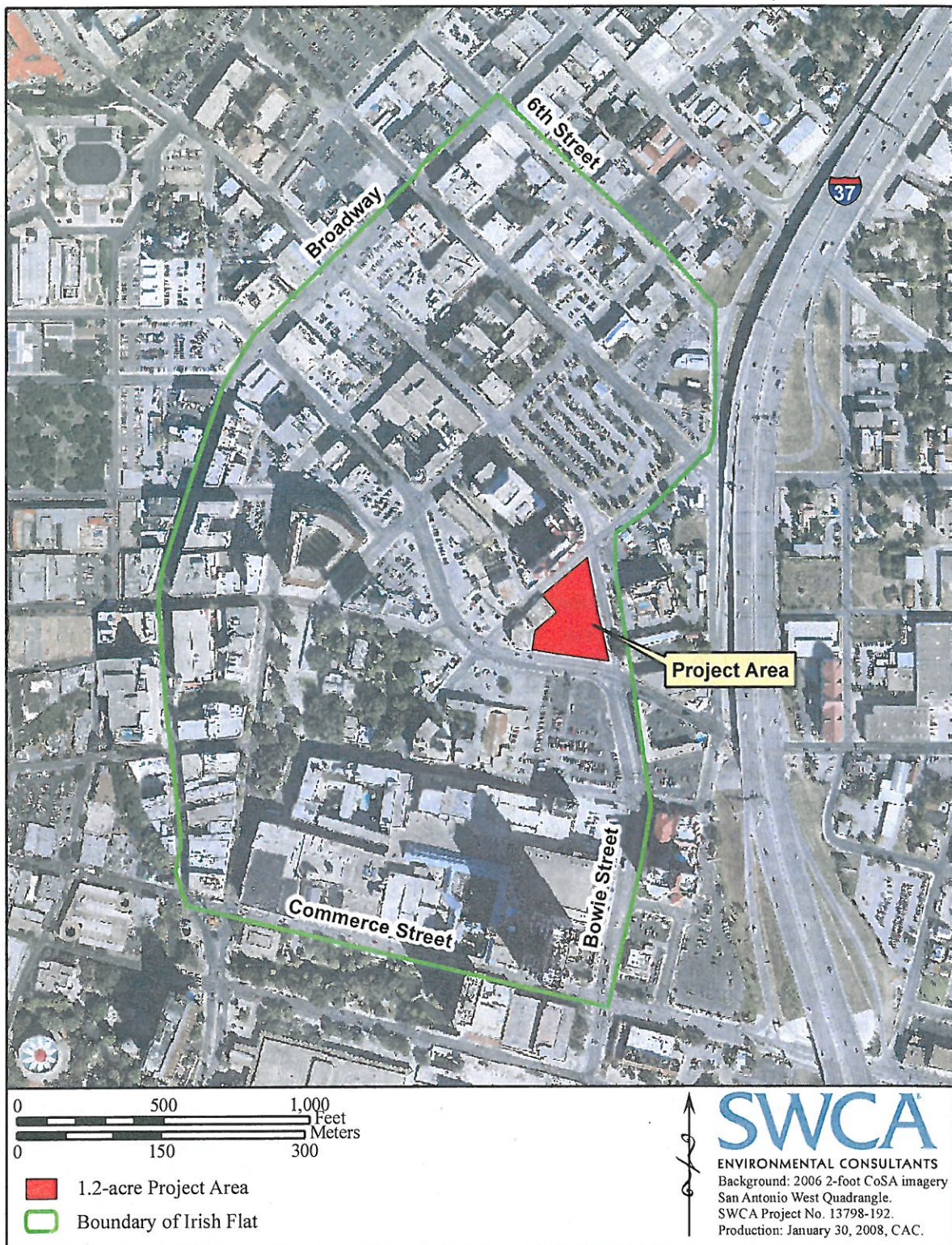


Figure 7. Map of Irish Flat.



church facing Nacogdoches Street beyond East Houston Street (Butterfield 1968).

The Upper Acequia System seen in the 1835 and 1836 maps of the Siege of Bexar and Battle of the Alamo was mapped again in an 1857 map of the streets of San Antonio. This 1857 map contains the first depiction of the project area with acequia ditches to either side of it, rather than through it (Figure 8). The Acequia Madre flows to the east of Bowie Street and of the project area. A more detailed map from 1868 clearly shows the Acequia Madre flowing south between Bowie and Elm streets and well east of the project area (Figure 9). A map from 1869 continues to depict the Acequia Madre to the east and outside of the project area (Figure 10). A building is depicted in the approximate center of the project area and probably fronted Nacogdoches Road. It may have been a temporary building as it is not depicted on later maps.

On March 2, 1861 Texas seceded from the Union and soon after the Civil War began. San Antonio became a Confederate storage area as well as a location where military units could be organized; however, the city kept its distance from most of the actual fighting (Fehrenbach 2008).

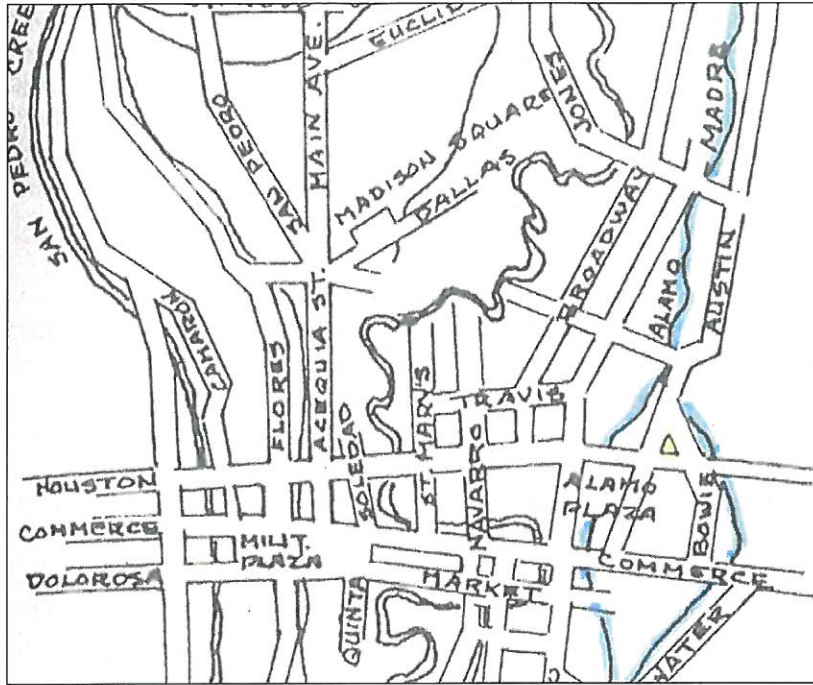
After the Civil War, San Antonio continued to grow larger, spurred on by the arrival of the railroad in 1877 (Fehrenbach 2008; House 1949). Industries such as cattle, distribution, ranching, mercantile, gas, oil, and military centers in San Antonio prospered. Despite the overall growth of the city, the project area remained a tree-covered lot as late as 1873 (Figures 11 and 12). The city served as the distribution point for the Mexico-United States border as well as the rest of the southwest. At the turn of the twentieth century, San Antonio was the largest city in Texas with a population of more than 53,000.

Much of the city's growth after the Civil War was a result of an influx of southerners fleeing the decimated, reconstruction-era south. An additional population increase came after 1910, when large numbers of Mexicans began moving into Texas to escape the Mexican Revolution (Fehrenbach 1978).

Modernization increased dramatically between the 1880s and the 1890s, compared to the rest of the United States. Civic government, utilities, electric lights and street railways, street paving and maintenance, water supply, telephones, hospitals, and a city power plant were all built or planned around this time (Butterfield 1968; Fehrenbach 2008).

A map from 1889 was located with a high level of detail and illustrates both streets and acequias, but few buildings. As such, the map does not confirm that no buildings were located on the project area at this time (Figure 13). However, an 1888 map available from the Sanborn Map Company of Pelham, New York, which recorded structural information pertinent to the insurance industry, depicts other information.

According to the 1888 Sanborn map, the project area between Nacogdoches Road, East Houston, and Bowie streets was occupied by the Degener & Co. Planing Mill (Figure 14). This mill consisted of six enclosed structures, two open lumber structures and a small shed. The first two enclosed structures, located at the corner of East Houston Street and Bowie Street, had reinforced concrete flooring and iron clad walls on all sides except the one facing East Houston Street, which was partly iron clad. The larger of these structures contained a carport at its western end. In addition, four iron chimneys were located within both structures. The smaller of the structures, which appeared to be added onto the eastern end of the first, contained a horizontal steam boiler and engine fuel.

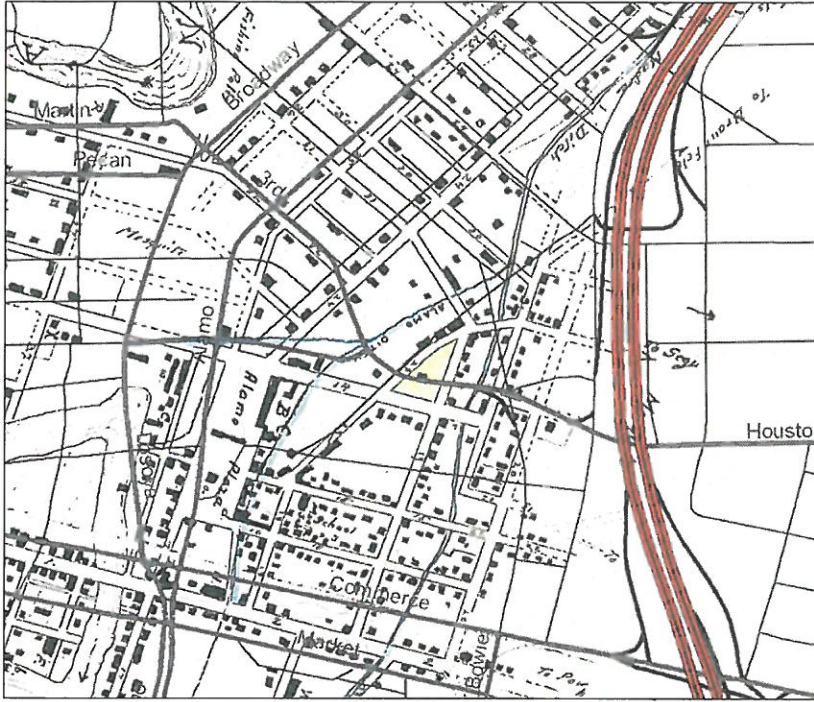


**Figure 8.** The project area is depicted in yellow on this portion of an 1857 map of the Upper Acequia System (adapted from Schuetz 1970:Figure 4). The path of the Acequia Madre is highlighted in blue and is now depicted on either side of the project area.

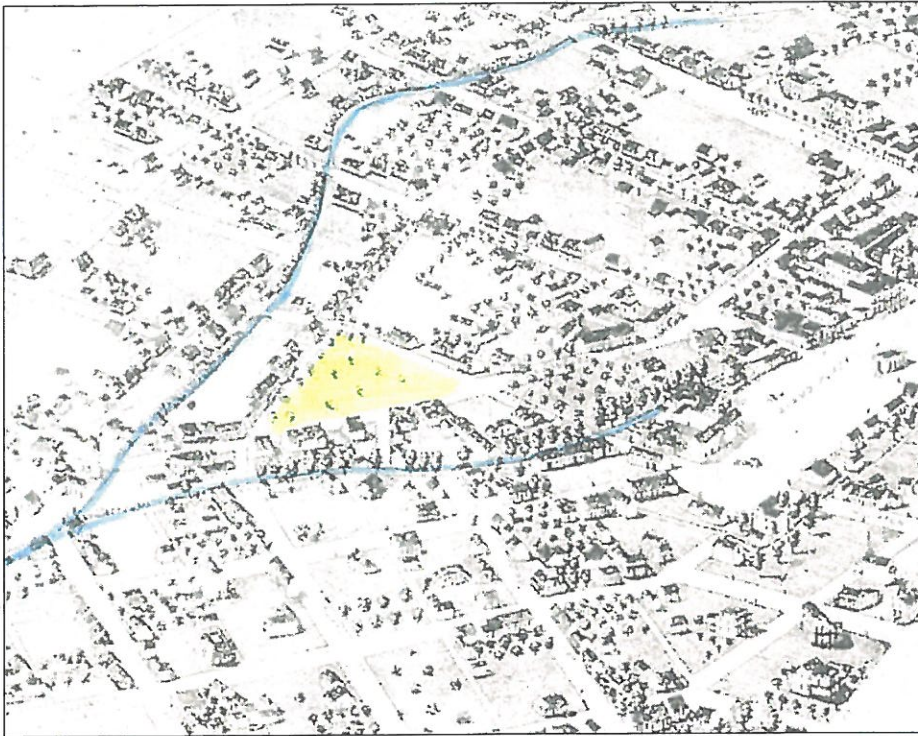
**Figure 9.** The project area is depicted in yellow on this 1868 map that has been geo-referenced with modern street locations. The path of the Acequia Madre is highlighted in blue and continues to be depicted on either side of the project area.





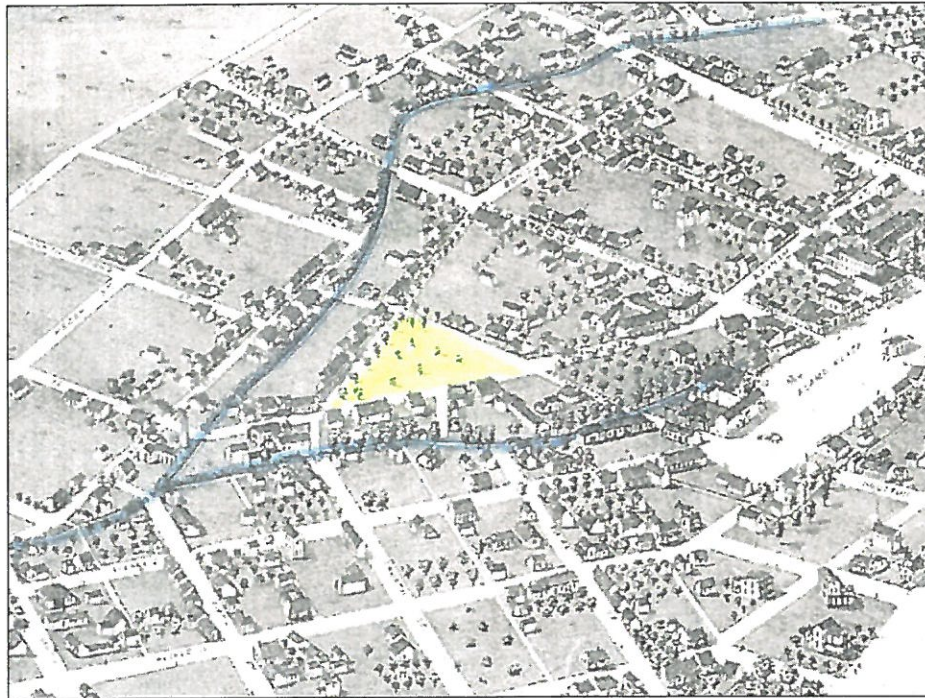


**Figure 10.** The project area is depicted in yellow on this 1869 map that has been geo-referenced with modern street locations. The path of the Acequia Madre is highlighted in blue. This is the first depiction of any building on the project area. The building is an unknown type, but was most likely temporary. It is not depicted on later maps.



**Figure 11.**  
Project area on a  
bird's eye view  
map from 1873 by  
Koch. Note the  
route of the  
acequias to either  
side, but not  
through, the  
project area in this  
and the next  
figure.

**Figure 12.**  
Project area on a  
bird's eye view  
map from 1873 by  
Loring.









Two more structures, also constructed with reinforced concrete floors, and a small shed were located north of these structures. These two buildings each contained an iron chimney. One of these was used to store dressed lumber and had open-framed construction. However, the majority of the lumber for the mill was stored in two larger, open-framed structures along Nacogdoches Road. The final two buildings were located at the corner of Nacogdoches Road and East Houston Street. One appears to have been the sash, doors, and blinds department of the mill. It was constructed with reinforced concrete flooring and had an iron chimney. The other small building, an office, had concrete on metal lath flooring and an iron chimney.

Interestingly, no structures are depicted on the project area according to the 1896 Sanborn map (Figure 15). It seems unlikely that all of the improvements to the property depicted on the 1888 map were wiped out, but it is possible that the land was cleared of all its buildings between 1888 and 1896 (a period of eight years) in preparation for some new construction.

### **MODERN PERIOD (1900–1950)**

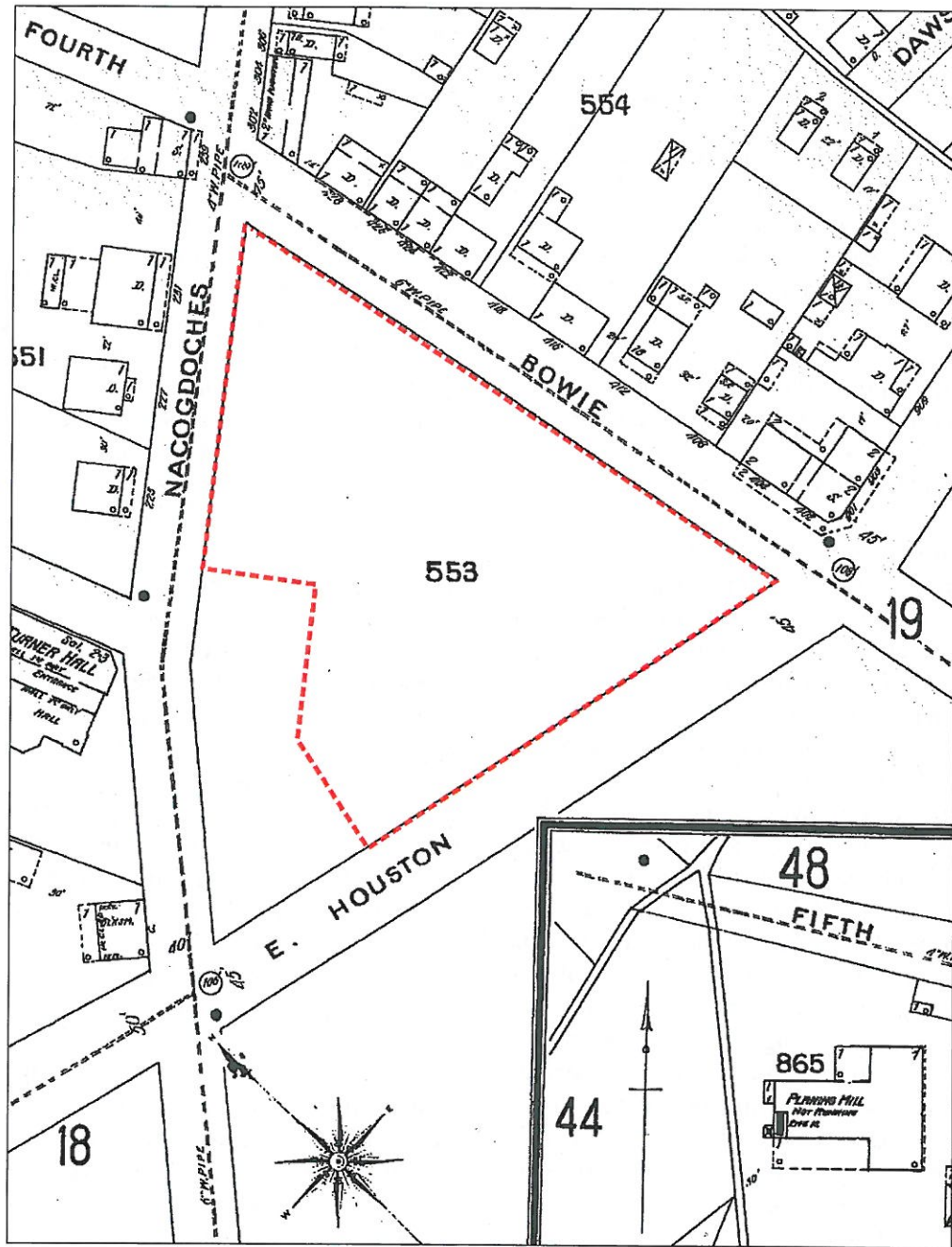
According to one source, a few city events occurred in or around the project area in the early 1900s, although the project area itself was not the focus of these activities and remained an outlying property. In May of 1903, the second Annual Horse Show was held on Alamo Plaza. In 1924, a 13-story Medical Arts Building was built on the corner of Houston Street and Avenue E. In addition, the San Antonio Express dedicated a new building located on the corner of Avenue E and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (Heusinger 1951).

In 1921, a disastrous flood engulfed Houston and St. Mary's Street with approximately 9 feet of water. The Olmos Dam was built in

response to this event to prevent further flooding. Sections of the San Antonio River were straightened and widened in areas to control the water flow. Another recommendation was to construct an underground channel in downtown San Antonio and to cover portions of the river with concrete. This last idea upset some people, but a compromise was eventually agreed upon to create a Riverwalk with shops and restaurants along the water channel. Construction of this Riverwalk was completed in 1941 (House 1949; Long 2008).

As the United States entered World War II, San Antonio became an important military center and other city activities and construction ceased for nearly five years. Fort Sam Houston and Kelly, Randolph, Brooks, and Lackland Air Force bases are all active military training centers today (Heusinger 1951).

Tourism is one of San Antonio's most important industries drawing tens of thousands of visitors every year. More recent features include theme parks, zoos, museums, gardens, parks, and sporting attractions. The Riverwalk, also known as the Paseo del Rio, consists of over 2.5 miles of shops and is probably one of San Antonio's most visited attractions. The missions in San Antonio are another huge tourist attraction. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park includes The Alamo (1718), Mission Concepción (1731), Mission San José (1720), Mission San Juan Capistrano (1731), and Mission San Francisco de la Espada (1741) (Fehrenbach 2008). Visitors also enjoy other architecturally important historic structures like San Fernando Cathedral (1758), the Spanish Governor's Palace (1749), the Quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston (1878), and the Bexar County Courthouse (1891) (Fehrenbach 2008).



**Figure 15.** The project area is depicted on this Sanborn map from 1896. Red dashed line indicates the project area boundary.

## 1904-1951 SANBORN MAP DESCRIPTIONS

One of the best methods of determining historic ownership and occupation in urban settings is through the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Several of these maps have been discussed in the previous section on the late 1800s, but the early twentieth century appears to be most active period of development in the project area. The years consulted for this project include 1904, 1912, and 1951. For ease of description, the following narrative of the Sanborn maps includes the entire block bounded by East Houston Street, Bowie Street, and Nacogdoches Road.

By the turn of the century, the project area had been developed by the Carter-Mullaly Transfer Company (Figure 16). The 1904 Sanborn map depicts wagon and carriage sheds and stables in the northeast portion of the project area. These buildings contained three iron chimneys within an iron clad, open-framed structure. A two-story office was located in the southwest corner of the project area. This brick veneered on wood frame structure contained an iron chimney, concrete on metal lath flooring, indirectly protected steel joists, columns, beams, trusses and arches. The one-story, northern half of the building was iron clad with an iron chimney. Two separate buildings near the southeast corner of the project area housed the Carriage Printing and a blacksmith and wheel wright shop. The print shop, which faced Bowie Street, also had indirectly protected steel joists, columns, beams, trusses, and arches. It was iron clad and had a vertical steam boiler and acetylene gas machines in the rear. The blacksmith and wheel wright shop fronted East Houston Street and was iron clad, with an iron chimney and an unprotected steel frame.

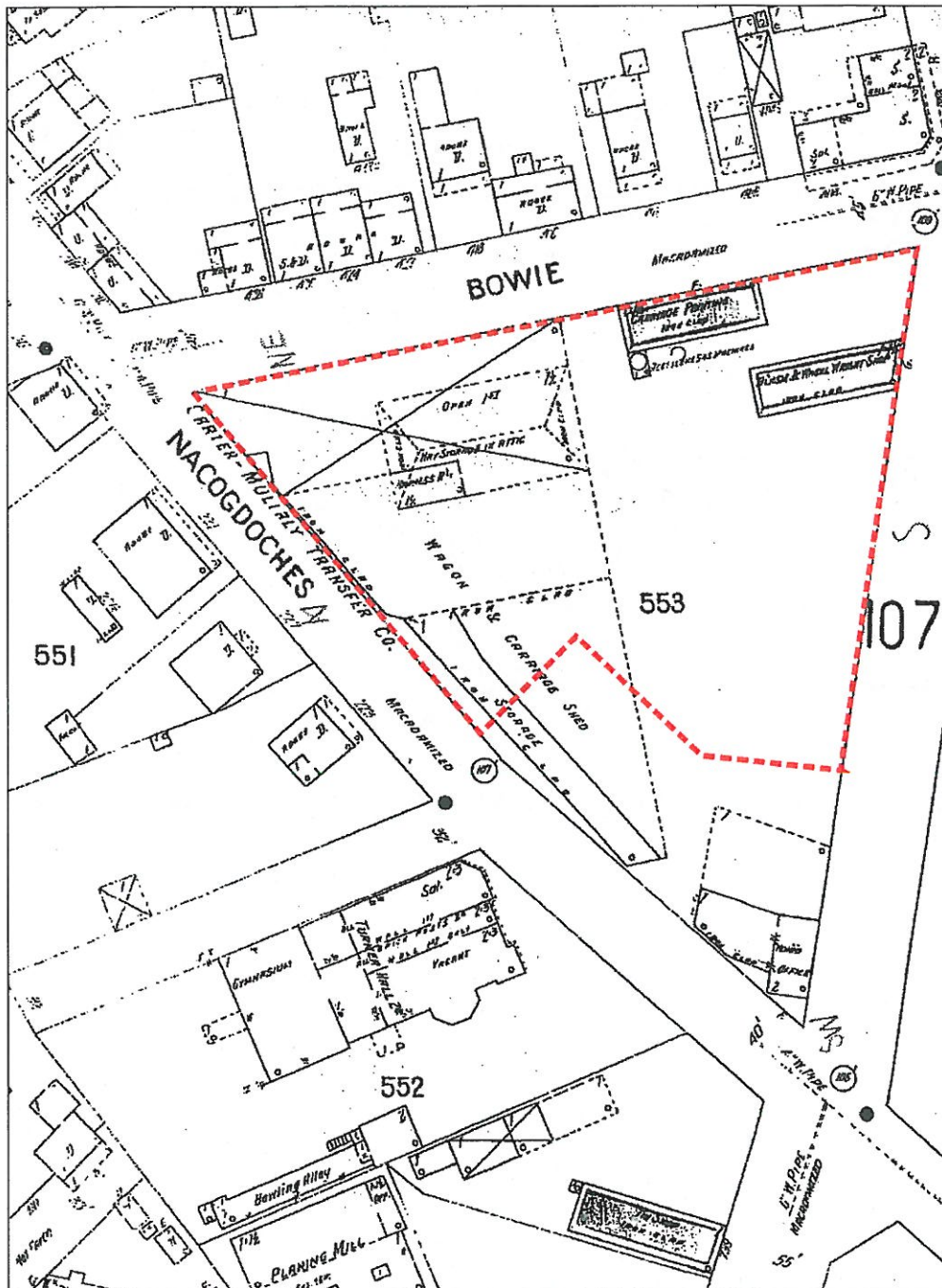
By 1912, the Carter-Mullaly Transfer Company had added several new buildings to their property along Nacogdoches Road (Figure 17). A veterinary and garage were

added on either side of the blacksmith shop near the corner of Bowie and East Houston streets. Both were iron clad with one iron chimney each. The development continued west along East Houston Street where a trimming shop with three floors and a vertical steam boiler was built next to the garage as well as a concrete storage building. The storage building also had a vertical steam boiler. Two buildings—a furniture store and an unnamed structure—contained open elevators. The furniture store had an iron chimney and the unnamed building had a vertical steam boiler. A partially open wagon shed structure was located next to these buildings and had an iron chimney.

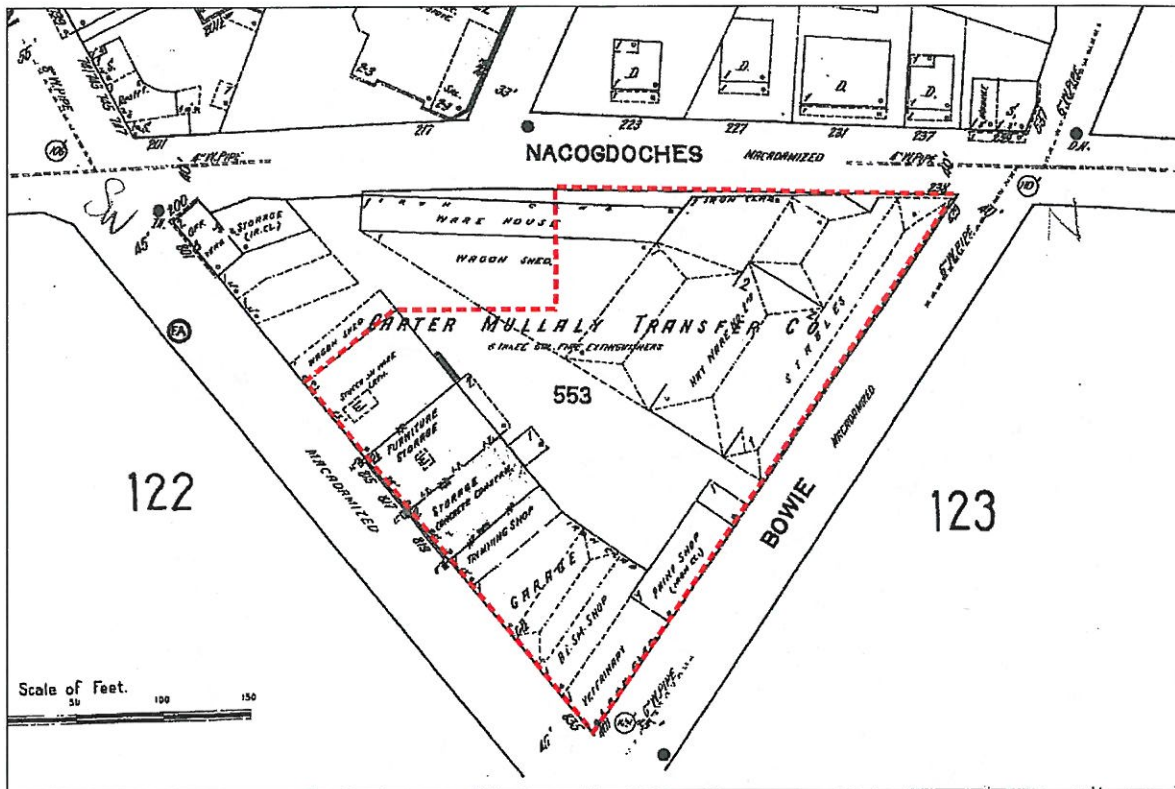
The next available Sanborn map is from 1951, by which time the project area had once again been redeveloped (Figure 18). Near the corner of Nacogdoches Road and Bowie Street, were a gas station, an auto repair and paint spraying shop, an office, and a parking lot. The gas station was constructed of concrete frame, flooring, and roofing with concrete block curtain walls. The auto repair and paint spraying shop had a steel frame with concrete flooring, a concrete roof on steel joists, and concrete block curtain walls. The office had concrete frame and flooring, concrete roofing on steel joists, and tile curtain walls.

The Central Fire Headquarters and repair shop is located in the southwest corner of the project area. These two structures were built in 1938 of fireproof construction with concrete frames, floors, and roofing. This represents the first large fire station in San Antonio and is part of a rich legacy of Works Progress Administration (WPA) construction during the Depression. The buildings have stone-faced exterior walls along Nacogdoches Road (now Bonham Street), and suspended metal to lath and plaster ceilings.

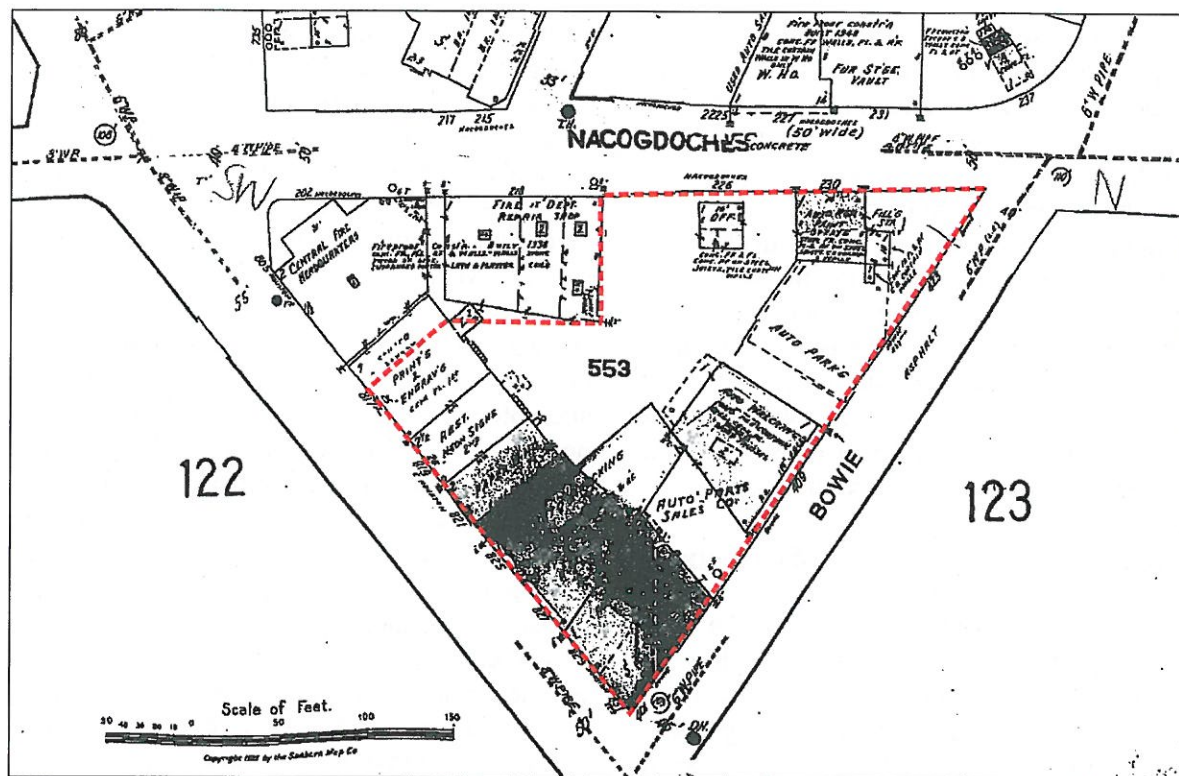




**Figure 16.** The project area is depicted on this Sanborn map from 1904. Red dashed line indicates the project area boundary.



**Figure 17.** The project area is depicted on this Sanborn map from 1912. Red dashed line indicates the project area boundary.



**Figure 18.** The project area is depicted on this Sanborn map from 1951. Red dashed line indicates the project area boundary.



There are several buildings along East Houston Street to the corner of Bowie Street, including a printing and engraving shop, a restaurant, a neon sign shop, and an auto wrecking center. The Sanborn map quality is poor; however, most of these structures appear to have an iron chimney or vertical steam boiler. The printing and engraving shop has a stucco exterior and a cement first floor. Along Bowie Street there is an extension of the auto wrecking center and an auto parts store with concrete walls, cement flooring, and tile curtain walls with wooden trusses. The auto parts store also has a gasoline tank.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD METHODS**

As part of the compliance process, the HPO requested that an archaeologist monitor the excavation and removal of the existing parking lot. The goal of the monitoring was to gather information on the nature and types of cultural resources possibly buried in the project area with a focus on potentially significant resources related to the Spanish Colonial era and the Alamo. In addition, prior to monitoring, SWCA worked closely with Consort, Inc. and construction teams to develop a plan and methodology that ensured the safety of the archaeological crews.

The archaeologist coordinated all field activities with appropriate personnel and any on-site construction foreman regarding scheduling and safety. The monitoring archaeologist attended a pre-construction meeting to ensure full coordination prior to construction. The archaeologist complied with all applicable OSHA safety regulations and wore all required safety equipment (e.g., hardhat and steel-toed boots). Monitoring consisted of a qualified archaeologist observing the excavation process, the excavation area, and their resulting fill, frequently inspecting it for cultural remains. If encountered, artifacts were examined,

quantified and assessed as to age and origin, and generally were not collected. Diagnostic artifacts or those of particular interest were to be collected for further study in SWCA labs. Particular attention was given to any cultural resources that may date to the early to middle nineteenth century as well as an affiliation with the Alamo.

If intact cultural resources were revealed in the construction process, the archaeologist attempted to make a determination as to potential significance. At this point, construction was to be temporarily halted so that the archaeologist could better examine the cultural materials or features, take photographs, and thoroughly document the finds. Once the materials were assessed, construction recommenced, and continued as planned. Only if the materials were assessed as extremely significant (mainly human remains or burials) was construction in the immediate area to be halted. If a localized work stoppage was required, the monitoring archaeologist would immediately call all involved parties (Consort, Inc., THC, HPO, etc.) to discuss the find and formulate a plan of action. However, over the course of the project it was not necessary to implement this emergency contingency plan.

SWCA conducted a non-collection survey. Artifacts were tabulated, analyzed, and documented in the field, but not collected. Temporally diagnostic artifacts were described in detail and photographed in the field.

### **RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

The monitoring occurred during two separate periods of hotel construction activity. Specifically, these involved an initial removal of soils containing above normal levels of lead

and a subsequent removal of the remaining portions of the project area.

On July 21, 2009, excavators removed fill containing above normal levels of lead from the eastern end of the project area. Further excavations, from September 21 to September 30, 2009 removed asphalt and additional fill from five other areas. These areas were excavated to depths determined by Terracon Consultants, Inc. to contain normal levels or be essentially free of lead. The spoil from these areas was removed from the site and deposited in a landfill specially designed to house this type of waste.

The second phase of the construction activity involved the excavation of the remaining portions of the project area. This phase took place over 35 days from September 21 to November 18, 2009. The archaeologist monitored the construction activities from near the edge of the pit, frequently assessing both the excavation profiles and spoils for cultural remains. Special attention was paid to the horizons of disturbance and development directly atop the native clay soil, usually found approximately 3–5 feet below the surface.

Although relatively few artifacts were recovered during monitoring, some items highlight the various businesses associated with this area. Most of the cultural materials recorded relate to mid to late twentieth century construction. Disconnected metal and ceramic pipes were common in the top meter of soil. Sections of the project area had been covered in concrete and construction fill and over a dozen concrete piers or footings were noted throughout the project area along with several types of brick, asbestos tile, and plaster and concrete floors. Eighteen features were recorded in the project area including four isolated features, eight structural features and

six undetermined features (Figure 19; Table 1).

## **STRATIGRAPHY**

For a predominance of the project area, the excavations encountered four horizons (Zones I–IV). However, in select areas where excavations went to about 20 feet below the surface, up to seven distinct horizons were observed. With few exceptions, all cultural materials and construction activities are confined to the upper four of the seven horizons. As such, Zone IV was the first horizon where natural stratigraphy is encountered and where all previous historic construction was built upon. Of note, cultural activities within Zone IV reflected construction that had excavated into this horizon (i.e., sewer and water lines or concrete piers). In contrast, the upper three horizons were extensively modified and mixed multiple times throughout the history of the project area. Detailed descriptions of all seven horizons (Zones I–VII) are presented below.

Zones I and II comprise the initial asphalt layer and an underlying orange construction base, respectively (Figure 20). These horizons appear to have a contemporaneous construction that represents the most recent construction. Oddly, one of the oldest artifacts observed within the project area was recovered from Zone I asphalt (Figure 21). This artifact (described in detail below) is a mid-nineteenth century inkpot and was identified *in situ* within the asphalt. No cultural materials were observed in the underlying Zone II.

Zone III was the most extensive of the project horizons and exhibited the most disturbances. Further, this zone contained the widest variety of cultural artifacts, which encompassed the





Figure 19. Results map.



Table 1. Encountered Features

Designation	Description	Location
Feature 1	Circular isolated brick feature made with red, unmarked bricks at least 5 feet or more in diameter with a floor that is possibly plaster or adobe.	Western portion in Zone IV (4 feet bs)
Feature 2	A rectangular brick feature with red brick and mortar construction encased in concrete.	Central portion of project area, 3.5 feet below surface
Feature 3	A brick feature with tan to yellow bricks representing the remains of a wall with areas of plaster floor layers noted in a nearby profile section.	SW area; bricks begin just below the orange construction fill layer (Zone 2)
Feature 3	A direct line of yellow and weathered bricks (running roughly north-south) extends at least 15 meters into the project area from the Houston Street entrance.	Along E. Houston Street
Feature 4	Tile floor made of some type of fibrous material possibly asbestos, laid directly on top concrete slabs that cover a brick feature (possibly a wall remnant).	Southwest area
Feature 5	Linear structural brick feature made of yellow/tan bricks	Southwest area
Feature 6	A brick structure, possibly a cellar, with tan to yellow bricks, several courses high, and deeply buried, it may be the remains of a basement.	SW corner about 50 cmbs in Zone IV extending almost to Zone V
Feature 7	plaster floor	north corner
Feature 8	A scattering of red brick fragments with some clusters suggesting a possible feature. Associated with a 13 inch x 13 inch cement foundation block or footing.	Eastern area, about 75 cmbs
Feature 9	Single layer of machine cut red bricks stamped with "ALAMO" covering an area about 4 meters east to west and 8 meters north to south.	SE corner uncovered directly under asphalt
Feature 10	A brick feature representing the remains of a wall or standing feature with four layers (40 cm thick) of whitish yellow machine cut bricks.	SW area, just below Zone II
Feature 11	Small red brick feature, possibly a privy. The feature probably is about 55 cm NE to SE, approximately 73" high (at least 30 bricks from top to bottom).	NE area, found just below the Zone II (35 cmbs) in mixed and disturbed soils.
Feature 12	Modern sand pit with metal, concrete, glass, plastic	NW area just below asphalt (Zone I)
Feature 13	Modern sand pit 3.5 m long x .5 m thick	Near the warehouse on the western side of the project area.
Feature 14	Small concentration of burned bone, metal and glass covering an area 24 x 70 cm	6-8 meters NE of firehouse in Zone IV at 100-110 cmbs.
Feature 14	Soot layer with charcoal pieces and flecks	Covers a good portion of the west and northern areas of the project usually noted about 10 cm above Zone IV. However, it ranges in elevation across the site and in the far northwest corner, the soot layer was noted at 80-110 cmbs
Feature 15	Modern sand pit perhaps from sewage line; 2 m wide and 1.6 m tall	Noted within the Bowie Street sidewalk profile; roughly 1 meter below the asphalt surface
Feature 16	A structural feature with three courses of light orange brick set on 30 cm of mixed limestone cobbles in very sandy cement. Some fragments exhibited remains of wooden boards still attached to the base of the concrete.	SE corner, 50- 110 cmbs
Feature 17	Most likely a well with a cast iron pump with hot rivets	SE corner, well reaches approximately 23 ft below street surface
Feature 18 possibly related to F16	Fragmented sandy concrete slabs about 30 cm thick. The concrete seems like an earlier form of material (similar to Feature 16) with large limestone cobbles and sand cement, although without the wooden remains or associated bricks.	SE area; 20 cm asphalt (directly beneath the orange construction fill of Zone II)



Figure 20. Close-up profile of project area stratigraphy, note multiple layers of cultural Zone III; arrows indicate beginning and end of Zone III.



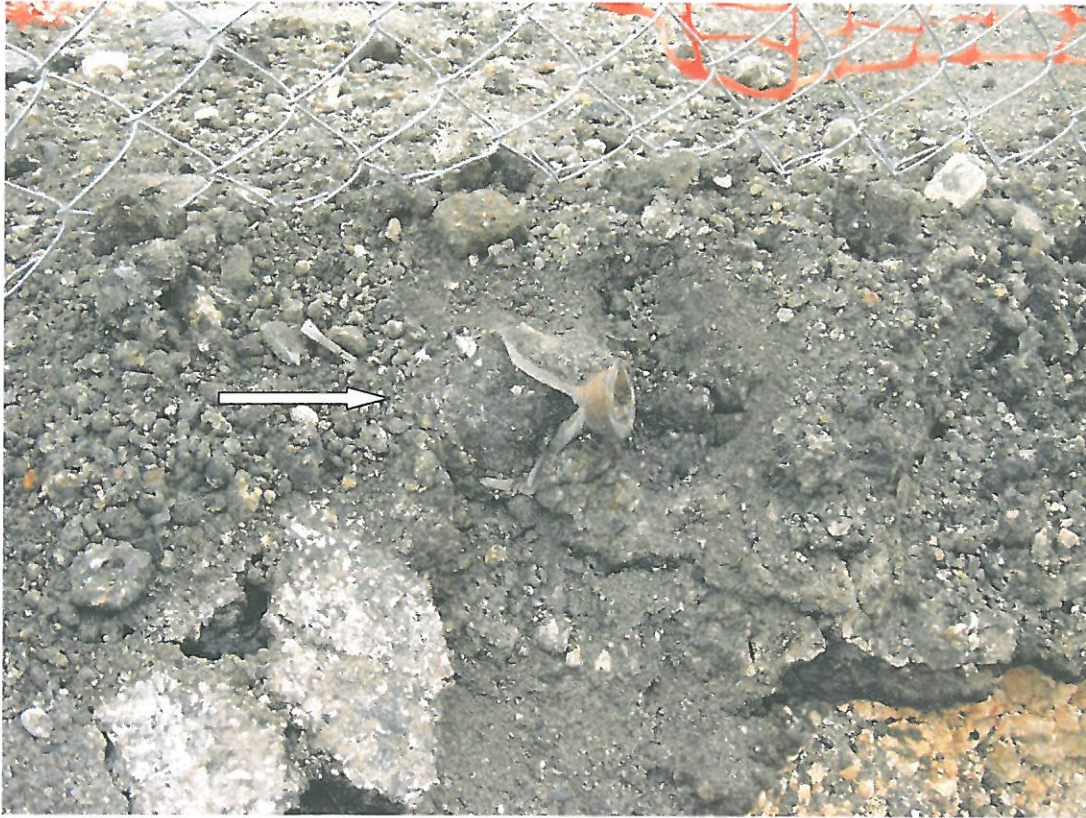


Figure 21. Close up of *in situ* mid-nineteenth century ink jar within Zone I asphalt.



largest temporal span. Simply put, Zone III represents all of the construction activities (both historical and modern) that seem to have occurred within the project area (see Figure 20). Zone III began at about 1 foot below the surface and typically extended to about 5 feet in depth. This horizon was the least consistent in regards to thickness throughout the project area. Specifically, Zone III had an undulating base with the deepest areas having excavated into the underlying horizon (Figure 22). Zone III ranged from 2–6 feet with a typical 4-foot thickness. This horizon contained a wide variety of construction debris and refuse and numerous localized lenses of fill. Almost all of the cultural materials observed within the project area came from this churned horizon.

The underlying Zone IV was an easily recognizable and relatively consistent layer of native soil. Although Zone IV did show evidence of disturbance, the impacts were confined to the upper horizon limits as it was the first natural horizon observed within the project area (see Figures 20 and 22). Beginning at roughly 5 feet, Zone IV consisted of a dark (10YR2/1) clay loam-clay with a slightly undulating base and few gravels terminating at approximately 8 feet. The evidence of cultural activities within Zone IV solely consisted of construction activities, which had excavated into this horizon (e.g., building piers or sewer line).

Below Zone IV is an intact, natural stratum (Zone V) that begins at approximately 8 feet below the surface (see Figure 22). This horizon is the lowest level reached in most of the project area as it met the construction requirements (i.e., 10 feet in depth). Zone V consisted of a yellow to yellow orange clay with an angular blocky structure, common slickensides, prominent filaments of ferrous like staining (redoximorphic?) with rare (about 1 percent) limestone pebbles that are subrounded to rounded. The base of Zone V

was clear and smooth suggesting a gradual transition into the underlying Zone VI.

Zones VI and VII were only encountered in the southwestern corner of the project area where excavations exceeded 10 feet. Extending from roughly 12–15 feet below the surface was Zone VI, a matrix supported horizon of yellow orange clay with some  $\text{CaCO}_3$  filaments and small nodules and rare gravel pebbles. This stratum was very firm with an angular blocky structure. The lower boundary was clear and smooth. Finally from 15–20+ feet, Zone VII was an indurated horizon of clay with abundant  $\text{CaCO}_3$  inclusions and nodules.

### **ARTIFACTS AND DEBRIS**

In general, pre-twentieth century artifacts were scarce, highly fragmented, and in poor contexts. Although the proximity (500 feet) to the Alamo raised hopes of finding something culturally related to the Battle of the Alamo, only one artifact of dubious provenience was recovered that could possibly date to the event. A solitary round metal ball (roughly 1 inch in diameter) was found by a construction worker (Figure 23). This artifact is similar in appearance to a cannon grape shot but, unfortunately may have originated from a different construction site in San Antonio. The artifact was found in a ball of mud attached to the pump used to drain a couple of construction sites in the same week and therefore its original provenience can not be determined.

One decorated whiteware fragment was found on the west portion of the project area, north of the warehouse. The hand-painted green leaf design and red lip border of this ceramic bowl fragment strongly resembles Englishware ceramics archaeologically recorded from several towns in the Rio Grande Valley (Figure 24). Specifically, Galindo (2003:263)

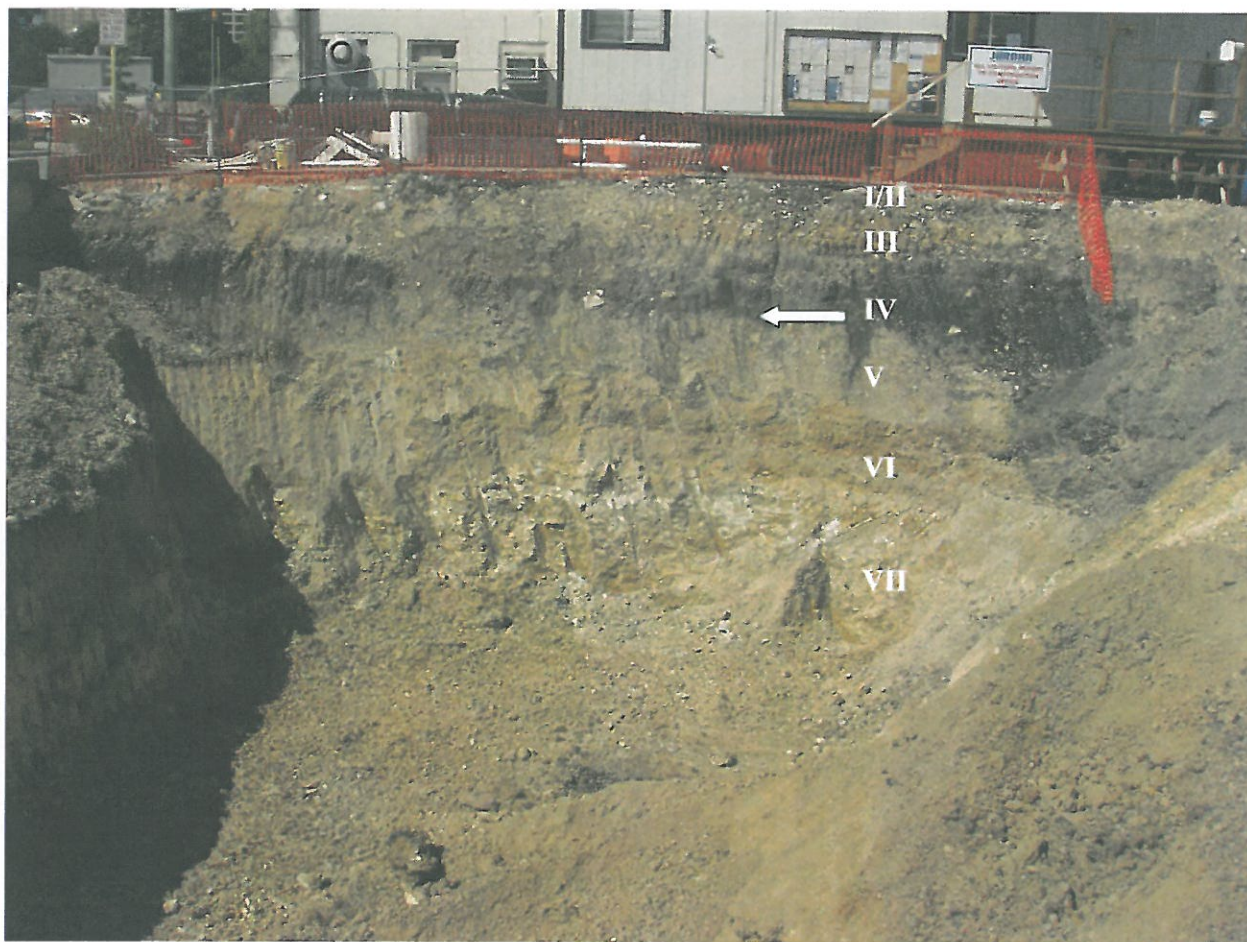


Figure 22. Profile of project area stratigraphy; arrow indicates base of cultural deposits. Base of pit is approximately 18 feet.





Figure 23. Close-up of metal ball similar in appearance to an historic 'Canister Grape Shot'.





Figure 24. Hand painted Englishware

recorded several very similar pieces at the Spanish colonial town of Mier. According to Fox et al. (2009:93), hand-painted whitewares imported from England into Texas can be dated to the years 1840–1860. Chronologically, the next oldest, datable item from the project area is the previously mentioned inkpot. This artifact is a nineteenth century (probably from the 1860s) stoneware inkpot that was recovered from the north corner, from Zone I. It reads: “VITREOUS STONE BOTTLES. J. BOURNE & SON. PATENTEES. DENBY POTTERY. NEAR DERBY. P & J. ARNOLD. LONDON. ENGLAND” (Figure 25). It is unclear whether the inkpot was imported to the area at the time of the construction of the asphalt layer it was discovered in, or if it came from a lower depth and was disturbed during the construction of the asphalt layer that contained it. Regardless, the context of the artifact attests to the significance of the disturbance that has taken place within the project area.

A single horseshoe and a bridal mouth bit were recovered that may relate to the Carter-Mullaly Transfer Company that operated in the northeast portion of the project area in 1904. Only three pieces of aqua glass were recovered (datable to pre-1910) and no amethyst or amber glass fragments were recovered. A few pieces of brown glass were recorded, one of which may be the fragments of a snuff bottle.

Two complete bottles were recorded from the central part of the site. Both of clear glass, one was a medicine bottle with a crown cap and fully automatic manufacturing techniques. It has D688 on the bottom and “2 1/2 FL OZS” embossed on shoulder. The other complete bottle is a clear flask with a screw cap that has “1/2 PINT” embossed on the shoulder as well as “FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS THE SALE OR REUSE OF THIS BOTTLE”. Based upon the manufacturing techniques,

color, and markings on these bottles, their manufacture post-dates 1945. Other more recent artifacts include one porcelain mug, a flower pot fragment, a plastic electrical socket, and a few machine cut animal bone fragments.

The northern section of the project area contained remains associated with the automobile repair and paint spraying shop shown on the 1951 Sanborn map. For example, a car headlight fragment, a dipstick, o-ring seals, a valve stem, a vehicle hood latch, wires, and miscellaneous metal fragments were recorded in mixed deposits. Concrete piers or footings reinforced with rebar were common in disturbed soils. Several large pieces of concrete were recovered on the northern end of the project area that may relate to the concrete canopy of the gas station that was in this area.

Undoubtedly the most prevalent type of cultural material observed throughout the project area was related to infrastructure, including metal and ceramic pipes and brick features.

## **FEATURES**

### **ISOLATED FEATURES (FEATURES 1, 2, 11 AND 17)**

Four isolated features (Features 1, 2, 11, and 17) were documented during monitoring. Feature 1, located very near Bonham Street was a circular red brick structure that may have been an incinerator or a chimney due the large amount of burned material and soot inside the structure (Figure 26). This structure was comprised of dry-laid, red brick, machine-made with no maker’s marks. The structure was 5 feet or more in diameter with a floor that was possibly plaster or adobe. It was in the same area that the 1951 Sanborn map shows a small office building, approximately



Figure 25. A late nineteenth-century ceramic ink bottle was uncovered in the top asphalt layer of the project area.





Figure 26. This isolated brick structure, Feature 1, was possibly a privy.

midway between the firehouse and the intersection of Bonham and Bowie streets, about 10 feet into the project area. The bottom of Feature 1 reached to the base of Zone IV.

Feature 2 was a smaller rectangular structure made of red brick that was lined with plaster or a similar substance, and had a rounded lip along the top opening (Figures 27 and 28). No soot was apparent in the interior of the structure, but heavy moisture content was present and may be that this structure was a well or cistern.

Also located along Bonham Street, another isolated brick feature (Feature 11) was recorded just below the construction fill layer. Feature 11 was a small red-brick feature beginning at a foot below the surface and continuing into unexcavated soil. The feature was about 22 inches northeast to southeast and approximately 73 inches high (at least 30 bricks from top to bottom) (Figure 29). The sidewalls of the oval-shaped feature had at least two courses of brick while the bottom of the oval had at least four layers of stacked brick. The curved nature of the feature suggested it might have been a cistern in which case the exposed brick feature might be the remains of the capping episode.

In the southeast corner of the project area, the remains of a well were uncovered as the construction crew extended the depth of excavation to remove wet soil. The well (Feature 17) had been dug to an estimated depth of 23 feet below surface. About half way down, excavators removed what was probably a water pump (Figure 30). The large, cast iron piece of machinery measured 37 feet and  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches diameter with a 2-foot pipe extension that was manufactured with hot rivets. The well had been filled with a concrete pier with rebar and milled wood (both cut 2 x 4 inches and natural logs) but no other artifacts. The well may relate to the

blacksmith and wheel wright shop that occupied the southeast corner, facing Bowie Street.

#### **STRUCTURAL FEATURES (FEATURES 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 16, AND 18)**

Several more substantial brick features were observed during monitoring which were obviously structural remnants of buildings or walls. These features were more prevalent on the southern end of the project area with the southeast corner exhibiting what appeared to probably be the oldest building foundations on the lot.

In the southwest portion of the project area, four adjacent features were noted that were all made of matching yellow to tan bricks with no maker's marks. Features 3, 4, 5, and 10 were situated along East Houston Street in the areas indicated to have had commercial properties as early as 1912. These shops are indicated to have been a furniture store, a storage building, and a trimming shop. Similarly, the 1951 Sanborn map documents the presence of a printing and engraving shop, a neon sign shop, a restaurant, and an auto wrecking center. The visible remaining sections of the walls were 1.5–2.0 feet wide, aligned north to south, and began at eight inches below surface (Figure 31). Feature 3 captured one of the building corners extending about 65 feet into the project area from East Houston Street. Areas of plaster floor layers were noted in a nearby profile section and in general, this area had large amounts of building material and utility piping. The brick features were overlaid with concrete about 1 foot thick, except for Feature 10 which was directly beneath the orange construction fill layer (Zone II). The concrete nearest the surface (about eight inches in depth) of Feature 3 had a thin layer of plaster or sealant coated on its surface. The heavy use of alloy metals as reinforcement on the concrete implied that these features dated to the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, a





Figure 27. Feature 2



Figure 28. Feature 2 isolated brick structure directly under construction fill layers. East Houston Street is in the distance.



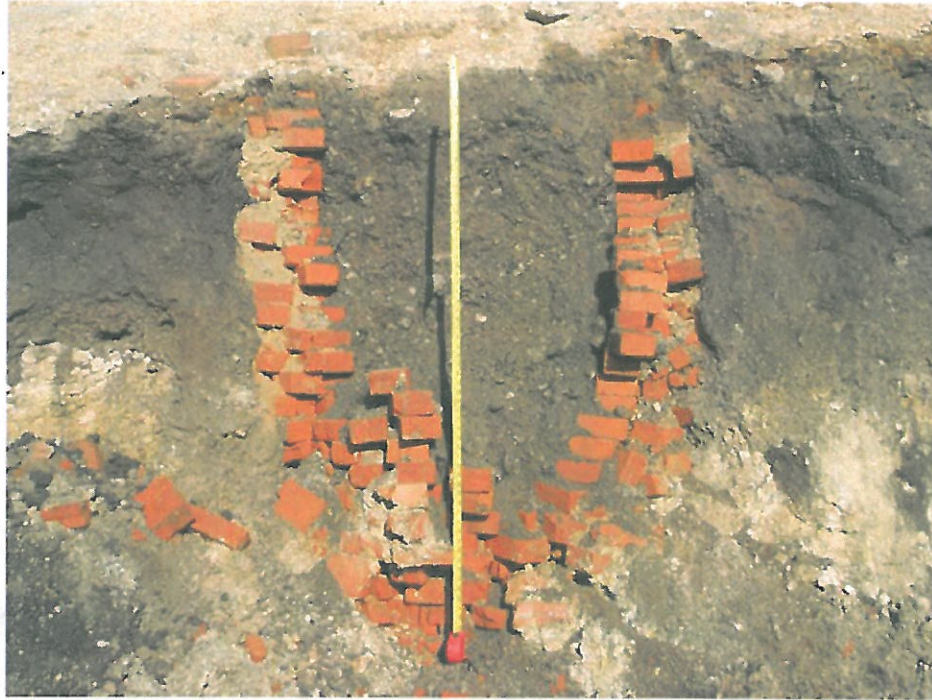


Figure 29. Feature 11 recorded near Bonham Street.



Figure 30. Large cast iron machinery, possibly part of a water pump, found inside a well in the southeast corner of the project area.



Figure 31. This structural feature (Feature 3) likely represents wall foundations of buildings that aligned East Houston Street.



large section of a tile floor (Feature 4), possibly made of asbestos, was uncovered directly on top of the concrete and may relate to the restaurant depicted on the 1951 Sanborn map (Figure 32).

Also located along East Houston Street, archaeologists recorded Feature 9 which was a single layer (13 x 26 feet) of machine-cut red bricks stamped with "ALAMO". These bricks were uncovered directly under asphalt, west of the existing parking lot entrance.

Located almost directly in front of the standing warehouse in the southwest, Feature 6 was a brick structure also constructed with tan to yellow bricks. Several courses high, and deeply buried, it may be the remains of a basement or a cellar (see Figure 31). A large corner portion of a concrete foundation was also uncovered. One of the brick walls was relatively preserved in the excavation pit and showed a load bearing design with the bottom being wider than the top. The soil and material on the interior of the structure did not differ significantly from the soil and material on the outside of the structure, indicating that the walls performed some type of support function and were dug into the deposits or that they were above ground before being buried under the most recent parking lot.

Feature 16 was brick and concrete construction feature uncovered while excavating the southeast corner of the project area. An *in situ* segment of this feature included bricks three courses high aligned east to west with a light orange color (distinct from others in the project area) and sand mortar between them (Figure 33). The bricks were below two horizons: the orange layer and a rocky, mottled brown loam, between 20–30 inches below surface. Below the bricks was a foot of mixed large limestone cobbles also set in very sandy cement. Additional slabs of this old cement surfaced with further excavations.

Two other pieces similar in form and material were uncovered that showed the bottom to have the remains of wooden boards still attached. The additional slab fragments (Feature 18) were found as the excavation extended west and were closer to the surface, just under the orange layer of Zone II.

#### **ENIGMATIC FEATURES (FEATURES 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, AND 15)**

During the course of the monitoring, numerous features were identified whose original form, function and history could not be identified. This was mainly due to their lack of provenience, highly fragmented nature, paucity of associated temporal information or a combination of these factors. These phenomena are briefly described to further characterize the nature of the project area deposits.

Located near Bowie Street, Feature 7 consisted of a small section of plaster flooring. This phenomenon was undecorated with no temporally diagnostic manufacturing techniques or artifacts present.

Located about 32 feet east of Feature 7 was a scatter of red brick identified as Feature 8. This feature also had an apparently associated concrete pier or footing that was roughly 13 square inches in size. No temporal information was observed.

Features 12 and 13 were pit features situated near the western margins of the project boundary. These phenomena were seemingly more recent in age as they had recent debris (e.g. plastic) intermixed with them.

A layer of soot, charcoal, and ash was noted in several sections of the project area and may represent construction fill, demolition activities, or a burn event. The layer had extremely abrupt lower and upper boundaries,





Figure 32. Tile flooring relating to a business (possibly the restaurant) that aligned East Houston Street.



Figure 33. Photograph shows the brick structural feature (Feature 16) on top of sandy cement that was recorded in the southeast corner of the project area.

but ranged in elevation across the site. In the southwest portion of the site, a thin bed of charcoal was noted at 22 inches below surface between two construction fill layers of light-colored, gravelly silt in Zone III. An excavation profile in the northwest, however, exhibited a foot-thick bed of sand with ash and cinder beginning at 30 inches below surface. Perhaps relating to this undetermined horizon, Feature 14 was a 1–2-foot area with a collection of burned material such as animal bone fragments, metal, and clear glass. Located about 23 feet northeast of the corner of the firehouse, it was recorded at a depth of 40–43 inches in the dark clay loam layer of Zone IV.

Feature 15 was a sand pit observed in the Bowie Street profile about 82 feet north of East Houston Street (Figure 34). This feature was likely associated with an older sewage system based upon the smell when exposed. No evidence of historical activity observed.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

SWCA conducted intensive cultural resource investigations at the 1.25-acre Springhill Suites/Fairfield Inn & Suites Project on the triangular lot cornered by Bonham, Bowie and East Houston streets in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. All work was conducted in compliance with the City of San Antonio HPO project requirements due to the sensitivity of nearby cultural resource sites, most notably the historic landmark of the Alamo. The work performed by SWCA included in-depth historical and archival research followed by intensive archaeological construction monitoring in an effort to identify, record, and characterize any extant historic resources or deposits in the 1.25-acre lot. The focus of the study was the Spanish Colonial period through the 1950s, particularly concentrating on the Texas Revolutionary period including, but not limited to, the Battle of the Alamo.

Briefly, the archival review found that the property was likely agricultural land up to 1869. During the Battle of the Alamo, most of the traffic bound for the mission from the east would have passed by the project area. Although difficult if not impossible to confirm, the project area may have been the site of a Mexican fortification. The artillery position that C. Sanchez Navarro recorded in his journal was located 250.8 m (823 feet) northeast of the Alamo, in the general direction of the project area. After the battle, little is noted at the project area until a building is depicted on an 1869 map. It is unclear if the property was used for commercial or residential purposes. The first clear indication of development on the property, commercial in nature, is on the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1888, when a lumber mill was in operation. However, the subsequent 1896 Sanborn map shows no development on the property, perhaps capturing a period between construction phases when old buildings were torn down to make room for new buildings.

The property continued to see commercial development throughout the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. In the twentieth century the project area contained the Carter-Mullaly Transfer Company (1904–1912) followed by more businesses. These include a veterinary, a garage, a trimming shop, a storage building, a furniture shop, several automobile industry-related businesses, a printing-engraving shop, a restaurant, and a neon sign shop. Ultimately, all of the buildings located on the property were eventually torn down and replaced with a parking lot, which exists on the property today.

Spanning several months, the construction monitoring identified cultural debris within the 1.25-acre lot spanning the mid-nineteenth to twentieth centuries. Eighteen cultural





Figure 34. Feature 15 was a sand pit recorded in the sidewall profile along Bowie Street.



features (Features 1–18) consisting of four isolated features, eight structural features and six undetermined features were recorded. These features all appeared to correlate to activities within the twentieth century. Of note, two of the oldest artifacts (i.e., inkpot and a decorated whiteware fragment) date to around the mid-nineteenth century. Finally, no information was encountered that could be associated with the early nineteenth century. A round metal ball, similar in appearance to a cannon grape shot, was found. However, this artifact could not be associated with the project area.

Overall, no definitive evidence suggested by artifacts or features were observed in the project area that could be associated with the Battle of the Alamo or the Republic of Texas era. Thus, all work within the 1.25-acre tract was conducted within extensively disturbed deposits predominantly dating to the twentieth century.

SWCA's intensive archaeological monitoring occurred during construction activities that occurred from July 21 to November 18, 2009. The monitoring activities were conducted in order to identify and record any existing cultural resources within the project area.

SWCA made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties within the project area. Based on the results of the monitoring efforts, the excavation and removal of the fill within the project area had no effect on significant cultural properties.

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